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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Have you put up any
Christmas décor yet?

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INSIDE



Simbang Gabi

Hundreds of Filipino Catholics on Saipan flocked churches as they began the longstanding tradition of Simbang Gabi or dawn mass as part of their Christmas celebration.

Maharlika...Page 10



Playing Santa

At Kmart stores across the country, Santa seems to be getting some help: Anonymous donors are paying off strangers' layaway accounts.

Business...Page 13

Jurors begin deliberations in sexual harassment lawsuit. **PAGE 2**
Finance: Report employee fringe benefits by Jan. 12. **PAGE 3**

Kilili looks at concerns raised on HR 1466 to move it forward

» As Fitial prepares alternative bill

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) said yesterday he has agreed to look at the concerns raised on his bill seeking a grant of CNMI-only resident status to four groups of nonresidents, and will work to reach an agreement "that will move the bill forward," even as Gov. Benigno R. Fitial prepares an alternative bill he said he will ask Sablan to introduce.



Sablan

Sablan's H.R. 1466 is no longer expected to be acted on before the U.S. House of Representatives goes on Christmas break after its removal from the calendar.

"A concern was raised about the bill at the last minute," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday. "So, at the request of Chairman Doc Hastings, I agreed to look

See KILILI on Page 4

CNMI gets \$400,000 from USCIS

» Admin to ask 'spending plan' from PSS, NMC

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos said yesterday that the CNMI government received this week a wire transfer of \$400,000 from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for the "\$150 CNMI education funding fee" that employers pay for each foreign worker they intend to hire.

This represents roughly 24 percent

See CNMI on Page 4



PUBLIC HEARING

Kwang Joong Kim, left, is congratulated by House minority leader Joseph DeLeon Guerrero (R-Saipan), right, and Rep. Tony Sablan (R-Saipan), center, after a Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations public hearing on Kim's nomination to the Marianas Visitors Authority board of directors on Thursday. The Senate EAGI Committee is recommending full Senate confirmation of Kim's appointment.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

CNMI one of 10 remaining US jurisdictions still with appointed AG

» As House panel OKs elected AG initiative but with technical changes

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The CNMI is one of only 10 remaining U.S. jurisdictions that still have an appointed attorney general, according to a

report prepared by the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations which is recommending passage of an initiative authorizing the election of an attorney general in the CNMI.

While the JGO Committee recom-

mends passage of the elected AG initiative, it has offered a new draft that has mostly technical amendments and proposes to lower the annual salary cap from \$150,000 to \$80,000.

Committee data shows that 45 of 55

U.S. states and territories, including Guam, now have elected AGs.

But the CNMI is among the remaining 10 jurisdictions still with appointed AGs, along with Alaska, American Samoa, District of Columbia, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Hawaii, Tennessee, U.S.

See AG on Page 4

Local

Jurors begin deliberations in sexual harassment lawsuit

The jurors yesterday afternoon began deliberating on the sexual harassment lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on behalf of a band singer who alleged that a then restaurant manager of Saipan Grand Hotel made sexual advances on her.

EEOC trial attorney Derek Li and attorney Steven Pixley, counsel for Saipan Grand Hotel's owners Asia Pacific Hotels Inc. and Tan Holdings Inc., completed their closing arguments in the morning.

After U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona gave the jury instructions in the afternoon, the

jurors began deliberating. The jurors did not reach a verdict and will resume their deliberations on Monday.

EEOC is demanding compensatory and punitive damages from defendants Asia Pacific and Tan Holdings. EEOC alleged that the defendants allowed the singer to be subjected to sexual harassment that was severe enough to create a hostile, abusive work environment.

In EEOC's closing arguments, Li said this case is about responsibility and accountability.

Li said the defendants have refused to accept their responsibility and therefore should be held accountable for their actions.

The EEOC counsel said the singer is here because she is traumatized.

He said the federal court pursuant to a consent decree ordered the defendants to conduct training about sexual harassment for their employees.

In addition, Li said, the managers supposed to receive additional trainings so they know how to investigate sexual harassment incidents.

Li said to the defendants' credit, there was evidence about training and anti-sexual harassment policies in 2006, but that the problem is that sexual harassment continued in the hotel.

The EEOC counsel said there

is no evidence of acknowledgment forms in 2006 and 2007 that the employees and managers underwent training on sexual harassment.

"They decided not to follow the court's order," Li said.

Li said the singer was not interested to engage in a romantic relationship with then restaurant manager Tomas Alegre, a married man.

Li said when the singer was drunk and at her most vulnerable, Alegre took advantage of her.

The EEOC counsel said there were a lot of talks about Alegre and the singer's relationship, but that it does not give Alegre permission to un-strap her bra

and lower her panty.

Li said the defendants' theory that the singer filed the complaint simply just she could stay on Saipan, does not make sense.

"Alegre knew that what he did was wrong. That's why he left for the Philippines," he said.

In the defendants' closing arguments, Pixley asked what about EEOC's responsibility.

Pixley said the case is not complicated, but the "abusive" EEOC makes the case complicated.

In citing the singer's many inconsistent statements, Pixley kept on repeating Mark Twain's famous quotation: "If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything."

Pixley said the singer is a performer and that she's performing in court.

"In order to be a good performer, you have to tell the truth," the lawyer pointed out.

Pixley said EEOC's expert Julie B. Yanow is a hired gun out to confuse the jurors.

Pixley said EEOC wants the jurors to believe that the singer

does not want to go to Saipan.

Showing an immigration document in which the singer signed stating she was an employee of a company from 2005 to the present, Pixley said the singer lied to immigration authorities in order to come to Saipan.

"If she lied to immigration authorities to come here, she will lie to get money from our company," Pixley said.

The lawyer said EEOC's own expert Yanow testified that the singer lied in her statements.

He stressed that the singer changed her story several times.

"I submit to you ladies and gentlemen from the jurors... there was a consensual relationship," Pixley said.

Pixley showed a document that Tan Holdings' legal department sent to EEOC on Jan. 2, 2007 regarding anti-sexual harassment policies and procedures.

Pixley said EEOC never responded.

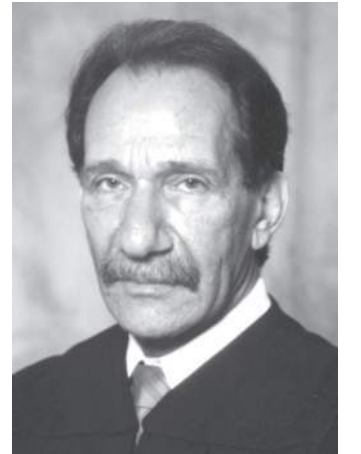
"They did not say that our policies were deficient," he pointed out. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

Man gets 23 days in jail for threatening to kill brother

A man who was arrested reportedly for threatening to kill his brother and family with a rifle during their argument over a land dispute, pleaded guilty yesterday to the offense of disturbing the peace.

Superior Court associate judge David Wiseman accepted defendant Ramon Sablan Tudela's guilty plea and sentenced him to 30 days in prison, all suspended except 23 days.

Wiseman gave the 47-year-



Wiseman

old Tudela credit for the 23 days he already served in jail.

It means that the defendant was released yesterday from the Department of Corrections and will no longer serve more jail term.

During a one-year probationary period, Tudela will be required to abstain from consuming any alcoholic beverages and shall have no direct or indirect contact with his brother and his (brother) immediate family.

Wiseman ordered Tudela to pay a \$50 fine and a \$10 court assessment fee.

According to the plea agreement, on Nov. 24, 2011 on Saipan, Tudela deprived his brother of his right to peace and quiet by threatening him and his family.

A police detective testified that during the argument, a rifle was found in Tudela's vehicle.

Apparently there was grabbing back and forth of the rifle between the brothers. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

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PRO SE

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF
THE NORTHERN MARIANA
ISLANDS**

**IN RE THE
MATTER OF THE
ADOPTION OF:
K.P.R.**

Minor Child,

by

**JAMES &
MARYANN REYES**
Petitioners

**FCD AD
CIVIL
ACTION
NO.**

11 - 0565

**ORDER SHORTENING TIME
AND NOTICE OF HEARING**

GOOD CAUSE APPEARING, It is hereby ordered that the time for notice of hearing for Petitioner(s) be shortened and that the hearing be set on December 21, 2011 at 1:30 p.m.

Dated this 16th day of December, 2011.

/s/ Perry B. Inos
Judge

Finance: Report employee fringe benefits by Jan. 12

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

Finance Secretary Larrisa Larson is reminding department

and activity heads of Executive Branch offices to report all employee compensation or fringe benefits by Jan. 12, 2012.

These fringe benefits include

housing benefit or cash allowance and/or the use of government vehicle in calendar year 2011.

"Fringe benefit information is supplemental to employees' payroll records," Larson said in a memo, with an attached form list-

ing fringe benefit information.

Employee compensation are required to be documented in preparation for information returns, specifically the Annual Wage and Tax Statement and Form W2-CM and/or Form

1099MISC that must be furnished to employees.

Each government department and activity unit that uses the services of the Division of Finance and Accounting must provide the division

with these information.

Larson said each department and activity head with expenditure authority is responsible to ensure all fringe benefits are reported to the Division of Finance and Accounting.

Deadline nears for Children's Healthy Living Training Program scholarship

As part of its efforts to curb childhood obesity, the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research and Extension Education Services (NMC-CREES) is encouraging those seeking a career focused on food, nutrition, and public health to apply for the Children's Healthy Living (CHL) Training Program, which provides financial assistance and support at selected college and university degree programs. Students who are interested in applying for the program must submit their applications before Dec. 30, 2011.

The CHL Training Program is designed to provide 22 promising undergraduate and graduate students in the Pacific Region, including the CNMI, with financial aid to pursue their studies to specified programs at the University of Alaska (Fairbanks and Anchorage), University of Hawaii at Manoa, Windward Community College, Kapi'olani Community College, or the University of Guam.

Unique to the program is the opportunity for students to complement their degree with additional training in research, outreach and other approaches related to preventing childhood obesity in the Pacific region.

Applicants should be a resident of a jurisdiction included in CHL (i.e., Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of

Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia) and must be a US citizen, US National, US green-card holder, or a citizen of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Republic of Palau.

Students who are indigenous/native to the jurisdictions noted above are encouraged to apply.

Further, applicants must apply to, or be currently enrolled in, a CHL-approved degree program to be eligible for admission into the CHL Training Program. Since the CHL Training Program is conducted within existing degree programs, applicants must meet all the admissions requirements of the degree program to which they are applying, as well as additional admission criteria imposed by CHL.

The CHL Training Program is accepting applicants for Fall 2012 admission. Applications to the CHL Training Program are due to CNMI Lead Site Coordinator Dr. Jang Ho Kim by December 30, 2011. Dr. Kim will forward all applications to the CHL Admissions Committee by January 15th, 2012. To view the application process and to obtain more detailed information about the CHL Training Program, visit <http://www.chl-pacific.org>.

The CHL Program for Remote Underserved Minority Populations in the Pacific Region is a partnership among Pacific jurisdictions, including the CNMI through the leadership of NMC-CREES. (PR)



MONETH G. DEPOSA

Officials and crewmembers of USNS *Dahl* gather for a group photo yesterday as they wrap toys for the children of Guma Esperanza.

Christmas toy drive benefits 71 kids at Guma Esperanza

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

Seventy-one children from the Karidat's Guma Esperanza were named beneficiaries of this year's Christmas Toy Drive organized by crewmembers and officials of the USNS *Dahl*, one of the military sealift command's ships under the pre-positioning program stationed in the islands.

Capt. Kurt Kleinschmidt, along with his 40-member crew, was seen busy wrapping their special presents for the children yesterday afternoon as they waited for the formal gift turnover to representatives of Guma Esperanza.

Kleinschmidt said this year marked the fourth annual toy drive conducted by crewmembers who took time to shop in Japan a couple of weeks ago. Besides toys, the group also donated \$2,000 yesterday as Christmas present to the adult clients of the shelter.

Guma Esperanza, or the House of Hope, is a shelter for battered women and their children in the island. In the past three years, Kleinschmidt said USNS *Dahl* consistently provided these clients assistance during Christmas.

"This campaign started several years back and it became a tradition for us. So every time we're here on island, we try to

do something for them during Christmas. This year, they gave us a list of 71 children from the shelter and so while we were in Okinawa a couple of weeks ago, our crew took the time to shop for these kids," he told *Saipan Tribune* as they were busy wrapping toys yesterday at Round Two Bar & Grill in Garapan.

He said toys were especially chosen for children ages 15 months to 17 years old. The crewmembers, he added, spent approximately \$1,000 for the Christmas toy drive.

USNS *Dahl* has been stationed in the Commonwealth for about six years. The captain yesterday vowed to continue the tradition of buying, wrapping, and giving

gifts to children so long they are stationed on island.

"As long as we're here, I guess we will try keeping doing this every year. We're very proud of our crewmembers and thank them for taking the time in doing this during Christmas time," he said, adding that the group's effort is a show of their commitment to the community. Yesterday's Christmas toy drive was coordinated by Ambyth Shipping Micronesia.

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Commerce announces FELD sub grantees

The Office of the Governor, through the Department of Commerce, announced yesterday the recipients of the Economic Labor Enhancement Program sub-grant under the U.S. Department of Interior's technical assistance grant.

Six recipients received notices of award yesterday at Commerce on Capital Hill for a combined total of \$586,000. The recipients are expected to expand and enhance "on-the-job training" and "job-readiness" to train

U.S. eligible workers (U.S. citizens, FAS citizens, and green card holders) per the federalization law, Public Law 110-229.

Acting Commerce secretary Sixto Igisomar congratulated the recipients on behalf of the governor and lieutenant governor. He further acknowledged Assistant Secretary Tony Babauta of the Office of Insular Affairs for his foresight and continuous support to the Commonwealth.

Commerce received a \$1 million

award from the U.S. Department of the Interior in July and of that amount, \$300,000 had been encumbered to hire an economist and \$700,000 was set aside for the Labor Enhancement Program or the "Quick Employee Development Program," the QED. The program was divided into three enhancement programs: tourism/hospitality, labor, and the agriculture and aquaculture, with available budget amount of \$50,000, \$450,000, and \$150,000, respectively.

KILILI

From Page 1

at the concern raised and see how we can respond. Over the next couple of days we will be working to reach an agreement that will move the bill forward."

Hastings (R-WA) is chair of the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Sablan did not elaborate what these specific concerns were.

However, Fitial, in his letter to congressional staffer Curtis Rhyne and Paul Teller, executive director for the U.S. House Republican Study Committee, enumerated his specific concerns.

Fitial, who is actively blocking HR 1466, said his efforts resulted in the removal of the bill from calendar.

He said Sablan's bill will impact over 10,000 people, but Sablan's office said the actual figure is much lower than Fitial's estimate.

The governor insists that HR 1466 is an amnesty bill, but Sablan said it's not. Fitial said those covered by the bill will continue to compete with the local labor pool. Fitial said the bill's passage would only set a "dangerous precedent that would set the stage for more demands, more amnesty and less integrity in the U.S. immigration system."

Those who are expected to benefit from HR 1466—including now unemployed long-term foreign workers with minor U.S. citizen children—are caught in the political crossfire in Congress.

Violy Dawana, 53, said yesterday she continues to hope that HR 1466 will be eventually passed by Congress. She said all she and her 15-year-old U.S. citizen son want is for her to be able to stay in the CNMI at least until her son graduates from high school.

"My son intends to join the U.S. Air Force. By then, I would be ready to go home if there's really no job available here for me," Dawana told *Saipan Tribune*.

Dawana came to Saipan in 1989 to work as a sewer for garment factories that manufactured international brands such as Levi's, Gap, Guess, and Aber-

crombie & Fitch. When the garment industry completely pulled out from Saipan, she moved to other jobs until the economy got worst and she lost her employment.

She was able to secure an umbrella permit that allowed her to remain in the CNMI until Nov. 27, 2011 despite being unemployed, which also gave her more time to care for her son. She applied for a humanitarian parole around Nov. 16, but has yet to receive a decision from USCIS.

"I'm nervous. I may have made some mistakes in my parole application. But I haven't heard from USCIS," she said, adding that she's aiming for the one-year parole that USCIS announced during Thanksgiving.

This new type of parole, if granted, will allow most of those covered by HR 1466 like Dawana to lawfully remain in the CNMI until Dec. 31, 2012.

"If I'm given one more year, I will really strive to find a new job and get my employment authorization. My son is still in ninth grade. I want him to be able to finish his high school. I have worked so many years in the CNMI and raised a family here. It would be hard for the family to break apart so all we ask is to be given a chance for me to be able to stay here and let my son finish high school," she added.

Dawana is just one of the hundreds or maybe thousands relying on HR 1466's passage.

Sablan's HR 1466 proposes a "CNMI-only resident status" for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens as of May 8, 2008 and continuing to be on the islands, CNMI permanent residents, those born in the CNMI between Jan. 1, 1974 and Jan. 9, 1978, and the spouses, parents or children of U.S. citizens under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Rabby Syed, president of United Workers Movement-NMI, said yesterday that those covered by HR 1466 should not lose hope.

He said removal from calendar does not mean defeat of the bill, but would give more time to have the bill fixed.

Syed said this should be an opportunity time as well for Sablan to include in his bill all long-term foreign workers

in the CNMI.

"And I continue to request Mr. Kilili to consider a bill granting improved status—green card or pathway to citizenship—to long-term foreign workers," he said.

He said he continues to hope that U.S. Congress will act on the Interior's recommendation to grant improved immigration status to long-term foreign workers in the CNMI, including a grant of U.S. citizenship, permanent residence status or green card, or a status similar to those granted to Freely Associated States citizens.

Fitial, for his part, said removal of HR 1466 from calendar means "there are still ways to get it back."

"But you're asking me what do I do next? I'm coming up with something better than what Kilili has. An employment-based visa," Fitial told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview at the Sandy Beach Homes ribbon cutting yesterday morning.

Fitial, now president again of the CNMI Republican Party, said he will give his proposed bill to Sablan because "he's the only one representing us there."

"I don't have any ill-feeling against Kilili. He's got a problem. He's not really working and protecting his people. That's why I told him, 'don't say that I don't have a heart for people. I do have a heart for people.' This heart now belongs to the people who trusted me to serve them," he said.

Fitial said he will wait "until it's very clear that 1466 will not be entertained" before he gives his proposal to Sablan.

When asked whether he would also consider supporting HR 1466 if Sablan addresses his concerns on the bill, Fitial said "sure."

"You know my concern. I don't want these pregnant mothers who came here and deliver babies and wait for Kilili's bill to become reality. Those are the groups that I will never support because they are burdens. You know my definition of burden—people who do not work or people who work illegally and do not contribute (not pay taxes)... PL 110-229 is intended and designed to do just that—to get rid of burdens," he added.

The fiscal year 2012 budget law requires at least \$500,000 of this fee to go to PSS.

But Inos said the administration has yet to provide money to either PSS or NMC out of the education funding fee that employers started paying since October for each foreign worker they hire.

"We are going to sit down with them, ask them for a spending plan or how they are going to use it... It's a standard thing," Inos told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview at the ribbon cutting for Sandy Beach Homes yesterday morning.

Inos, who oversees government fi-

SUB-GRANTEES LIST

Agriculture and Aquaculture Enhancement Program

- CNMI Aquaculture Producers Association: \$90,000
- Saipan Sabalu Farmers Market Inc.: \$46,000

Economic Labor Enhancement Program

- Marianas Resource Conservation and Development Council: \$145,000
- Northern Marianas Trade Institute: \$143,000
- Society for Human Resources Management: \$102,000
- The Bridge Project: \$60,000

"Although the award announcement date is a bit later than what we initially projected, I am grateful that we can now start to implement the long-awaited training plans that the applicants

envisioned through their submissions as well as provide support to the businesses and employee prospects alike," said press secretary Angel Demapan. (*Office of the Governor*)

AG

From Page 1

Virgin Islands, and Wyoming.

The JGO Committee, chaired by Rep. Ralph Demapan (Cov-Saipan), said as chief legal officer, the AG should be free of any political influence.

It said a politically appointed attorney general serves at the pleasure of the governor and may be removed by the governor with or without cause.

"The Committee therefore finds that in order to improve accountability, allow the attorney general to function independently, and to ensure the enforcement of Commonwealth laws, the attorney general should be an elected position, rather than appointed by the governor," the committee said.

The panel recommends passage of House Legislative Initiative 17-2, House Draft 2 in the form of House Draft 3.

The committee said while enactment of this initiative will result in additional costs to the CNMI government because of its placement on the ballot for voter ratification in the next general election, "the benefits of having an independent and accountable attorney general far outweigh such costs that may arise."

Rep. Frank Dela Cruz (R-Saipan), author of the initiative, said yesterday he's glad that the JGO Committee has already come up with a report on HLI 17-2, and hopes that it will soon pass the House and Senate, to be ratified by voters in the next general election.

"A lot of questions have been raised about the salary. The governor is making \$70,000 a year. Judges and justices receive over \$100,000 a year, even the executive director of CUC receives way over \$100,000 a year. Here we are talking about the highest legal authority in the CNMI, and we're offering \$80,000. I am amenable to such salary but in the future I hope we can change that," Dela Cruz told *Saipan Tribune*.

Under the initiative, while the AG's salary cap is \$80,000 a year, that amount can be changed by the Legislature upon the recommendation of the advisory commission on compensation

provided for by Article II Section 10. The AG's salary, however, may not be changed during a term of office.

Dela Cruz also said it's "about time we have an attorney general who will also work on recovery of money as identified by the Office of the Public Auditor."

"We lost so much money that could have been recovered by the CNMI government but because of statute of limitation, we couldn't recover them anymore. It's about time we get somebody in there serious about recovery of money," he said.

Dela Cruz was referring to the \$6.3 million that OPA had identified as potentially recoverable government money that includes unpaid rentals of land leases, overpayments in professional service contracts, and improper spending of public funds.

The NMI Constitution requires that the governor appoint an attorney general with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Dela Cruz's initiative will amend Article III Section 11 of the NMI Constitution to authorize the election of an AG.

HLI 17-2 was already headed for the Commonwealth Election Commission to be placed on the ballot after it passed the House and later on the Senate in March this year.

However, the House recalled the initiative to clarify discrepancies in the proposed salary.

Dela Cruz's original initiative proposed a \$150,000 annual salary for the elected AG, but what was transmitted to the Senate only reflected a salary of \$80,000 which Dela Cruz said won't be attractive to prospective candidates.

Now the JGO Committee's proposal is to maintain the salary cap at \$80,000 a year, which Dela Cruz said he doesn't mind being passed at the committee's proposed form hoping that it would be raised later on.

Under the proposed latest draft of the initiative, the elected AG would have a term of four years. All elections for AG shall coincide with mid-term elections. It allows for a runoff election if no candidate received more than half of the total votes cast.

Yumul said his bill is a "percentage-based formula."

"PL 17-55 budget law stops allocation when it expires Sept. 30, 2012," he added.

Yumul's bill, under review by the House Ways and Means Committee, seeks to allocate over \$3 million in expected money from the employers' education funding fee. But Yumul got this estimate from the 22,416 in numerical cap for foreign workers in fiscal year 2012, and not on the estimated number of foreign workers potentially eligible for CW status.

CNMI

From Page 1

of the estimated over \$1.652 million in expected education funding fees to be collected by the CNMI based on the 11,019 foreign workers covered in Commonwealth-only worker petitions filed as of Dec. 9.

Moreover, this is the first wire transfer from USCIS to the CNMI government. The first time was a \$22,000 check personally handed by a USCIS official to the CNMI government.

Inos said money collected from the education funding fee will go to both the Public School System and Northern Marianas College to help with their vocational education and training programs to boost the local labor pool as required by the law that placed CNMI immigration under federal control.

The money is supposed to be used by the CNMI to train U.S. workers who will fill the void left by foreign workers who left or will leave the Commonwealth. Most private sector jobs are held by foreign workers, while government jobs are mostly held by U.S. workers.

Only 20 *man'amko* bought digital yearbook

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Only about half of the congregates at the Aging Center have bought the 2011 Saipan Seniors Digital Yearbook produced by the Saipan Seniors Advisory Council.

Aging program coordinator Walter Manglona said in

an interview that 20 of the estimated 40 to 50 *man'amko* have bought the digital yearbook filmed in November.

Manglona provided free directing and editorial services for the digital yearbook that features comedic skits and segments about each of the *man'amko* at the center.

"I was very glad to help them

in this way because I lost my grandparents when I was still young," he said.

The digital yearbook, originally priced at \$12, is now sold for \$10 each as a fundraising activity for the council.

According to Manglona, the yearbook was designed as a souvenir as it also compiles video clips previously recorded.

"When we had the screening for the project, they saw that a lot of them who can't walk now used to dance before. Some have even passed away. So the yearbook is really a good way to remember the good old times which the *man'amko* really treasure," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Manglona disclosed that one

congregate, Magdalena Romo, burst into tears when she saw that her late husband was part of the digital yearbook.

"She saw her husband playing the guitar some three years ago for a Christmas program. She burst in tears and bought copies of the yearbook," he recounted.

Manglona said the coun-

cil only makes copies of the yearbook upon placing an order so they don't have to incur expenses.

He acknowledged Aging director Rose Mondala who has been supportive of the project from the beginning.

Manglona added that it will be up to the *man'amko* if they want to host a fundraising event that would involve showing the digital yearbook to the general public.

SCS students clean up Susupe Park

It was right before lunch, the sun's heat was in full effect, but that did not stop the eighth grade students of Saipan Community School from picking up trash at the Susupe Park. The Physical Education class taught by Mr. Schrader came out on Dec. 12, 2011 excited to pick up trash instead of going running or doing pushups.

Gloves and trash bags were provided by the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance (MINA), and once they were handed out to the students, they sped off. Some went off to the beach area while some steered closer to the parking lot or the road side. After about an hour, the students wrapped up their work and got together for a group photo.

Their instructor was also busy picking up the overlooked candy wrappers and etc.

About 30 lbs of trash was picked up that day consisting of plastic bottles, paper cups, food wrappers, and plastic utensils. About 8 to 10 lbs were recycled material and the remaining could not be recycled.

Every year, the islands' beaches and parks are swarmed with litter posing great threats to our marine and terrestrial animals. A lot of the litter closely resembles the diets of many marine animals such as plastic bags that resemble jellyfish; which turtles love to munch on! With more and more volunteers gained every day, we can hope to see cleaner

beaches and less threats to our coral reefs, the wildlife around



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Community School's Physical Education students of Mr. Schrader pose after cleaning up Susupe Park last Dec. 12.

Saipan-da welcomes visitors Christmas Day

Saipan-da, the panda-rhinoceros mascot of this beach resort destination, will be almost as busy as Santa Claus on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, welcoming visitors at the Saipan International Airport.

Saipan-da, to be joined by local island beauties, will greet an estimated 6,000 travelers arriving to spend the holidays in Saipan. Each child ages 11 and under will also receive a 2011 Saipan-da backpack as a souvenir of their visit.

"The holiday season is a great time to put a smile on the faces of visiting children with a gift from the Marianas Visitors Authority and

the people of the Northern Marianas," said MVA marketing manager Bruce Bateman. "The kids love them and take them home to be seen by other children there."

The MVA expects to distribute over 2,000 backpacks over the two-day period. The MVA also invites visitors and the community to celebrate Christmas in the Marianas in Garapan on Saturday, Dec. 17.

The 2011 Saipan-da backpack will be distributed by the Marianas Visitors Authority to approximately 2,000 children arriving in the Northern Mariana Islands on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. (MVA)

Kili's Saipan office now open on Saturdays

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Congressman Gregorio Kili Camacho Sablan announced Thursday that constituent services will now be available on Saturdays in the Saipan District Office.

"Your congressional office remains committed to providing constituent services when you need them," said Sablan. "I recognize that it is difficult for many people to visit their

congressional office during weekday business hours, so we are expanding our work week in order to provide more—and more convenient—access for constituents."

The Saipan District Office at the Joeten Center in Susupe will be open 8am to 12noon on Saturdays. Constituents can call or visit in person with questions, to raise issues or receive assistance

provided by the office.

"We remain accessible to our constituents through our toll free number, email, facebook, and offices on three islands; this is another key component to our commitment, and we're working towards making more improvements in 2012," Sablan added.

The Saipan district office is located on the first floor of the Joeten Commercial Building II

in Susupe. You can also contact the office by telephone at 670-323-2647/8.

The congressional office can provide help with federal agencies, if you can't get the answer you need in a timely fashion. It is also the place to go for information about admission to the U.S. service academies and for federal financial assistance for education. For a complete list of constituent services, visit www.sablan.house.gov. (PR)

CRIME OF THE WEEK

Robbery, theft at Saipan Community School

Crime Stoppers is seeking the community's assistance for information on a burglary and theft incident that occurred at Saipan Community School staff housing, located on Beach Road, Susupe.

Last Nov 30, at about 8:45am the victim, a 22-year-old Caucasian male was scheduled to teach a Physical Education course. The victim left his room and returned at approximately 9:45am to discover his window screen torn, window open, and personal items stolen.

The items stolen include a black water proof sea life digi-

tal camera, a MacBook laptop computer with snow ski stickers on it, a brown wallet containing credit cards, and a driver's license. The items stolen are estimated to be at over \$2,300.

The Department of Public Safety and Crime Stoppers are seeking help from the public. Please contact the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272 should you want to remain anonymous or use our website at www.nmicrimestoppers.com. Crime Stoppers pays up to \$1,000 for any information leading to an arrest. It pays to call. (PR)

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ., F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS

CITY TRUST BANK, Plaintiff,	CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0514
-v-	SECOND AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE
SUZETTE O. SASAMOTO and FELIX SASAMOTO, JR., Defendants.	

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to Order issued by the Court in this matter on October 21, 2010, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all the right, title, and interest of Defendant in and to the following property: Lot 011 G 1508, situated in Kagman III, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, and containing an area of 780 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 011/G 30, the original of which was recorded on May 11, 1994, as Document No. 94-1218, at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, December 30, 2011, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 14th day of November, 2011:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

Oh (Hong), Kum Sun
P.O. Box 503925
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone No.: 235-3811

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
OF THE COMMONWEALTH
OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition for the Change of Name of: OH (HONG), KUM SUN, Petitioner,	FCD CN CIVIL ACTION NO. 11-0570 NOTICE OF HEARING
--	--

Notice is hereby given that the above -entitled matter is set for a hearing on January 12, 2012, at 9:30 a.m. in Courtroom 217A before Honorable Judge Perry B. Inos

Dated this 12th day of December, 2011

Bernadita Sablan
Clerk of Court

/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court



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OR

Private Lessons ONLY \$400
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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Egypt's wary Christians

Muslims and Christians in Egypt made common cause in agitating for the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak, but the alliance is fraying. A report by the Los Angeles Times' Jeffrey Fleishman about the country's Coptic Christians—10 percent of the population—suggests that they are developing painful second thoughts about the “Arab Spring” now that Islamist parties are in the ascendance.

Like other Egyptians, Copts believe that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which took control after Mubarak was deposed, has overstayed its welcome. But even the military is viewed as more welcoming of Christians than the Islamic parties that have dominated the first phase of parliamentary elections. In recent days, some strident voices have called openly for a strict Islamic state. A popular preacher was dismissive of protection for minorities. “The Crusader Christians are a minority and we can never equate a minority's rights with the majority's,” said Wagdi Ghoneim. “How can they ask for the same rights as ours?”

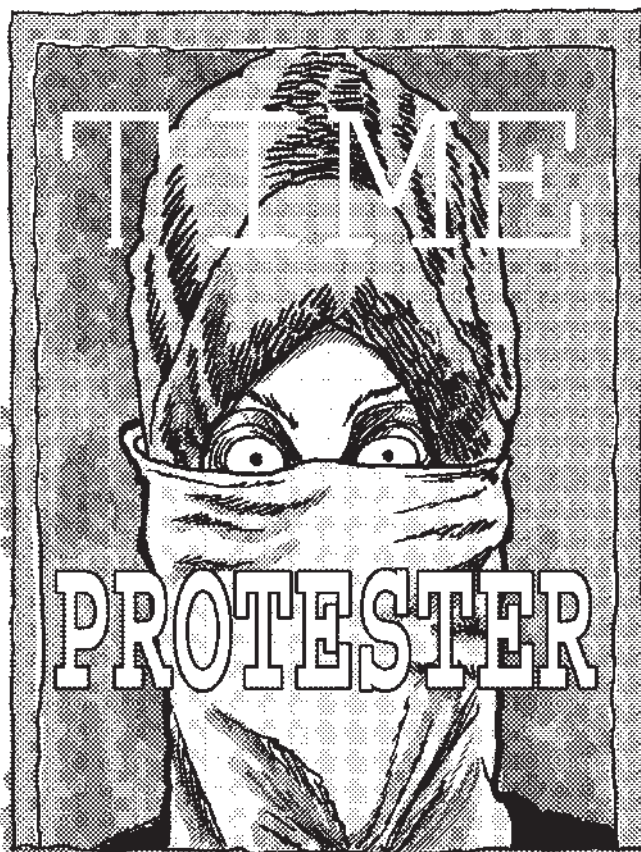
It is unclear how influential such voices are. The Muslim Brotherhood, whose party led in the first round of the elections, has been conciliatory toward Christians. A government in which it played the leading role could emphasize its Islamic roots without oppressing or marginalizing Christians. Or perhaps it wouldn't. There is no guarantee that, once in power, the Brotherhood would abide by its assurances.

Clearly Egypt will have to resolve the tension that is already evident between electoral democracy and pluralism. Its international credibility will depend to some extent on the degree to which it abides by international norms of religious freedom. But it is also in Egypt's domestic interest to protect Christians. Although many Egyptian Christians are impoverished, others—former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is an example—are highly educated and affluent and have played leading roles in Egypt's political and commercial life. Egypt would be poorer without them.

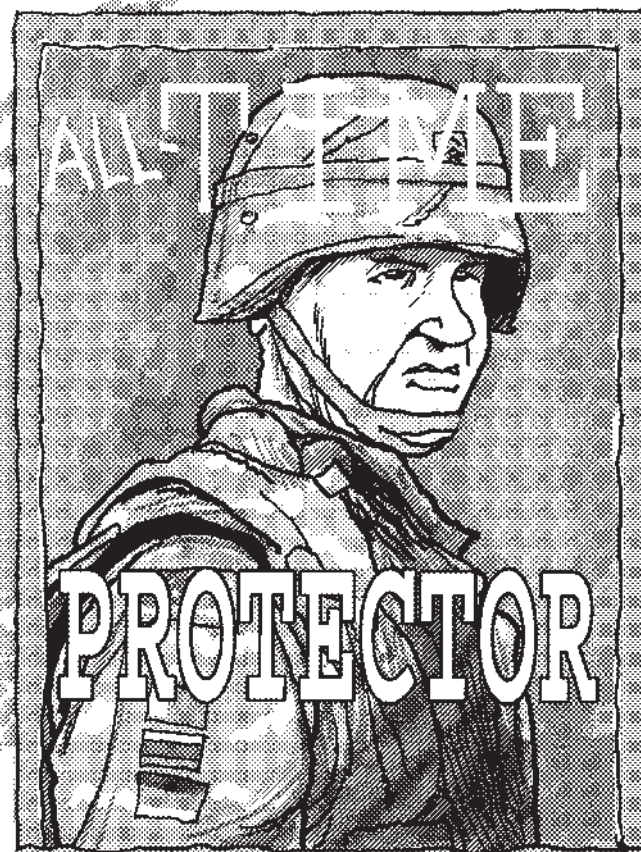
Laws that further institutionalized Islam also would speed the departure from Egypt of those Copts who have the means to relocate. The exodus of Christians from the Middle East, the cradle of their religion, is a sadly familiar story. From the West Bank to Lebanon to Iraq, they have left because of political instability, violence or discrimination. Sometimes they are refugees within their own countries. In 2008 more than 1,300 Iraqi Christians fled the city of Mosul after 14 were killed. Even when Christians stay—as the vast majority of Copts most likely would—their influence and well-being can suffer under an intolerant regime. That shouldn't happen in post-revolutionary Egypt.

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2011's PERSON of the YEAR

FOR OCCUPY
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WHO IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN.

FOR THE FREEDOMS ENJOYED
BY THE IDIOTS OF OCCUPY
WALL STREET

Can Washington get it right on Egypt?

Voters in Egypt, the largest, most populous Arab country, have just completed the first round of elections since overthrowing their longtime dictator. The results are as demoralizing as they were predictable: Some two-thirds of voters chose members of Islamist parties to represent them in parliament.

The grim landscape brings to mind the warnings that a private group of Middle East experts sent to the Obama administration in February 2010, months before the start of the protests. The Working Group on Egypt warned the administration that Egypt stood at “critical turning point” urging Washington to push for “gradual, responsible democratic reform,” or face damaging consequences for the Egyptian people, the United States and the entire Middle East.

The Working Group includes prominent members from all points on the political spectrum. Their most common trait is a strong interest and profound knowledge of the Middle East.

In the earliest days of the Egyptian uprising, on Jan. 29, they urged the Obama administration to call for free elections and to help arrange for a transition that included leaders of the democratic opposition. Mostly, they have called for the United States to support transition to a democracy that protects civil rights and liberties. Instead, Washington has responded with muddled inconsistency, as if it had been caught by surprise. In fact, the administration was urged to prepare for this situation in a country where it spends more than billion dollars a year trying to influence policy.

The political system in Egypt, is still under construction. The military committee that took control after President Hosni Mubarak was toppled, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, or SCAF, is still trying to maneuver to protect its future standing.

It's unclear how much direct influence over Egyptian politics and over the writing of the constitution the new parliament will have. We don't know what kind of political system the Egyptian constitution will dictate. Will it be a coalition-style parliamentary system with a prime minister? Or will it be a presidential system, with voters choosing the executive with vast powers?

What we do know is that the victory at the polls by Islamic parties is a defeat for progressive forces in Egypt; a defeat for the people and the ideals the United States and the West hope will prevail in Egypt, the Middle East and, for that matter,

By FRIDA GHITIS
McClatchy Newspapers

Frida Ghitis writes about global affairs for The Miami Herald. Readers may send her email at fghitis@gmail.com.



throughout the world.

The Muslim Brotherhood won about 40 percent of the vote. In today's Egypt, the MB is the more moderate of Islamist choices. It vows to respect civil liberties, democracy, women's equality, and relations with the United States and Israel.

The shocker in the elections was the strong showing of the hard-line ultra-conservative Salafists, who took nearly one-quarter of the vote. Their ideas are reminiscent of the Taliban and of the Saudi Wahhabis. Salafis reject democracy, freedom of religion, equality for the sexes, and modern life as we know it. For Egyptian women, for Coptic Christians—about 10 percent of the population—and for anyone who yearns to see the country move toward true democracy with personal and political freedom, the Brotherhood's victory is troubling, but the Salafists' strong showing is terrifying.

Perhaps the outcome of the election will frighten and energize those who have the most to lose inside Egypt. The truth, however, is that we always knew Islamists would win. We just didn't know the size of the landslide. During decades of dictatorship, political parties were banned; only the mosque and religious leaders were allowed to speak to the masses. Voters view Islamist parties as representing clean government, the ways of God. Islamists had a giant head start. Liberals brought the revolution, but they had no experience and little time to organize and educate the public.

The most prominent fact about Egypt today is political and economic uncertainty. But we know two things: One, the economy is collapsing, in desperate need of investment. Two, Washington spends a fortune in Egypt every day. Those two facts should add up to some degree of influence. Let's hope Washington uses it wisely this time.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

A United States of Europe?

Are we witnessing the birth of the United States of Europe?

There are uncanny similarities between the current round of wheeling and dealing and the founding of the United States of America. The Philadelphia Convention of 1787 represented America's second try at continental union. In 1781, the 13 states had come together behind a treaty-constitution that broadly resembles present European arrangements.

America's first effort was the Articles of Confederation. Like the European Union treaties, it guaranteed each citizen's right to move throughout the confederation and exercise all the economic privileges of home-staters. It also created a weak unicameral Congress and a judiciary for resolving inter-state disputes. But it did not grant the confederation independent powers of taxation, preventing it from guaranteeing the large war debts issued by each of the states. Because many states were in shaky financial condition, their bonds had dramatically depreciated in value, undermining the confidence of European investors in New World projects.

This was one of the problems motivating the movement "for a more perfect union."

The Constitution of 1787 granted new powers to impose taxes and set up an analogue to the Bank of England. Once it came into effect, the federal government moved quickly to create a national bank and to pay the depreciated state debt. This ended the credit crisis and established the credibility of the infant republic in European financial markets.

But before all this could happen, the founders confronted a threshold problem: So long as they were living under the laws of the confederation, it would be impossible to get their new Constitution ratified. Like the current European Union treaties, the Articles of Confederation explicitly required unanimous consent to any revision of its terms, and it was perfectly obvious that no such consent would be forthcoming.

Rhode Island was the Britain of its time—this small trading state was unwilling to give up its sovereignty to the federal colossus. It

refused to send delegates to the Philadelphia Convention, denouncing it as an illegal secessionist assembly, which is precisely what it turned out to be. After a summer of secret sessions, the Philadelphians went public with a document proclaiming that, despite the articles' requirement of unanimous consent, the new Constitution

The members of the new Eurozone treaty won't bludgeon Britain into Rhode Island-style capitulation. But if British Prime Minister David Cameron stands firm, his veto will likely lead to the ultimate exclusion of his nation from the EU. The projected treaty will create a large bloc whose interests systematically diverge from other members, but which will depend on a steady flow of supportive decisions by EU institutions to maintain the Eurozone's credibility.

would spring to life when only nine of the 13 states ratified.

Confronting this revolutionary change in the rules of the game, Rhode Island simply refused to play, as did North Carolina. When the first Congress met in 1789, there were 11 states in the union. The dissenting states caved under pressure—with Rhode Island entering in 1790 only when Congress began threatening to impose tariffs on its trade unless it abandoned the veto solemnly granted to it by the

permitted to have nuclear weapons.

By the end of the forum, however, I was convinced that the issue isn't so much credibility, as it is the Israeli conviction that the United States and Israel have a different take on the urgency of the threat.

Washington thinks the costs of a military strike on Iran would be so high that it shouldn't be considered unless every other option is exhausted. Israel, on the other hand, thinks the Iran threat is immediate.

As Dempsey said, the United States believes sanctions and diplomatic pressure are the right path, while leaving open the possibility of future military action.

"I'm not sure the Israelis share our assessment (of how to handle Iran and its nuclear program)," the chairman told Reuters. "And because they don't and because to them this is an existential threat, I think probably that it's fair to say our expectations are different right now."

In other words, the United States thinks there is still plenty of time to explore options other than military—although many Israelis don't.

At the forum, Israeli participants expressed concern that a U.S. decision on using force would come too late, perhaps not until Iran publicly announces it is withdrawing from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and kicks out international inspectors. By that time, they worry, most of the program may be deep underground.

Yet the most salient point, I believe, was made by Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, in the only forum address that was on the record. He pointed out that, at best, a military strike "might postpone (Iran's nuclear program) maybe one, possibly two years." It wouldn't destroy, merely delay, Iran's ability to produce an atomic weapon.

However, the "unintended consequences" of such a strike would be enormous, Panetta cautioned. Now isolated, Iran's rulers would get renewed regional support. Prospects for regime change within the country would shrink. An oil price spike would undermine the fragile global economy, while rewarding the ayatollahs.

A military strike could precipitate another regional war at a time when the Mideast is already going through convulsions. It could

By BRUCE ACKERMAN

Los Angeles Times

Bruce Ackerman is a professor of law and political science at Yale and the author of "We the People: Transformations." He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.



Articles of Confederation.

These embarrassing facts have long been forgotten, even by most serious students of the U.S. Constitution. But they put the current crisis in a new light.

The members of the new Eurozone treaty won't bludgeon Britain into Rhode Island-style capitulation. But if British Prime Minister David Cameron stands firm, his veto will likely lead to the ultimate exclusion of his nation from the EU. The projected treaty will create a large bloc whose interests systematically diverge from other members, but which will depend on a steady flow of supportive decisions by EU institutions to maintain the Eurozone's credibility.

Given these dynamics, Cameron is simply fooling himself if he really believes "that the EU institutions—the court, the commission—(would) work for all 27 nations" when this would compromise the euro bloc's fundamental interests. When Britain tries to undermine ongoing support for the Eurozone, it will predictably provoke a constitutional crisis—in which the euro bloc will eject Britain to prevent its continuing acts of sabotage.

This is a time for some serious diplomacy from the Obama administration. The United States should help bridge the gap between the Continent and Britain's divided coalition of conservatives and liberals, encouraging both sides to return to the bargaining table. If left unchecked, the current institutional dynamics will generate a United States of Continental Europe at an unacceptable price, gravely weakening the West for a very long time to come.

A troubling US-Israeli divide

Early this month, the top U.S. military officer was asked whether he thought Israel would alert the United States ahead of time if it attacked Iran's nuclear program.

"I don't know," said Gen. Martin Dempsey, the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs, in a blunt assessment. In other words, our military is unsure whether our closest Mideast ally would give us advance notice of an act that could drag us into another Mideast war.

I'm aware that Dempsey's remarks might have been a bit of psychological warfare. There's the obvious advantage of giving us deniability. And there might be benefit to portraying Israel as beyond U.S. control.

It might give the Iranian regime pause if it believed Israel was getting ready to take matters into its own hands. And China might be more willing to endorse tough sanctions on Iran, as Washington has fruitlessly urged, if Beijing thought the alternative was an Israeli military attack.

Yet, there is something about Dempsey's words that should make us uneasy. They exemplify a disturbing level of mistrust between Washington and Jerusalem that makes them ring true.

This mistrust is not, as Republican election campaign rhetoric would claim, a product of the administration's failure to support Israel. On the contrary, defense cooperation between the two countries has never been closer. Moreover, President Obama has twisted himself in knots to support Israel's opposition to Palestinian statehood efforts at the United Nations.

Nor is the mistrust—on the surface, anyway—a product of public differences over approaching Iran's nuclear program. After early attempts at engaging Iran failed, Obama adopted a tough stance toward Tehran, including harsh economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation. The president repeats at every opportunity that Iran will not be allowed to develop nuclear weapons and that all options (including military) are on the table.

Yet, as I witnessed at a fascinating, high-level dialogue in Washington between current and former Israeli and American officials, along with journalists and intellectuals, Israelis don't believe Obama. At the eighth Saban Forum, sponsored by the Brookings Institution, I heard Israelis say repeatedly that Obama and his team were not credible when they said Iran wouldn't be

By TRUDY RUBIN

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer.



embroil us in a new Mideast war, at a time when nuclear-armed Pakistan presents a greater danger to U.S. interests than Iran does. (Careless talk by Republican presidential candidates in support of hitting Tehran ignores the strategic implications of such an act.)

Israeli participants at the forum criticized Panetta for discussing the downside of an attack in public. Yet most of them also stressed that force must be the last option. Some even made clear that they believe it is preferable to use covert means, along with tougher sanctions, to delay Iran's program—although they don't think U.S. sanctions are tough enough.

In other words, their approach was not that different from the administration's. After all, if a military strike would only push the program back by one or two years, why not try other options?

Yet the forum—and my talks with individual participants—still left me with the impression that Israel might attack Iran without giving us advance notice—especially because Jerusalem fears Obama would say no.

Such an Israeli move would cost America dearly. Israel's military capacity doesn't match America's, and the United States would be dragged into any military action. Moreover, we would inevitably be blamed for an Israeli strike, with Iran and its proxies striking back at U.S. interests in the Muslim world.






More to the point, the United States is Israel's closest ally. For Jerusalem to ignore U.S. concerns and go it alone would be a betrayal of that friendship. Yet one can't rule this prospect out.

I came away from the Saban Forum thinking how urgent it is that U.S. and Israeli officials do better at coordinating Iran strategy in private. And Israel must factor in American interests. Otherwise, one can envision disaster ahead.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 88° ▼ 76°	▲ 88° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲ 85 ▼ 79
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲ 86 ▼ 77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲ 88 ▼ 79
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲ 86 ▼ 80
Pohnpei	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 78
Kosrae	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 78
Majuro	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 80

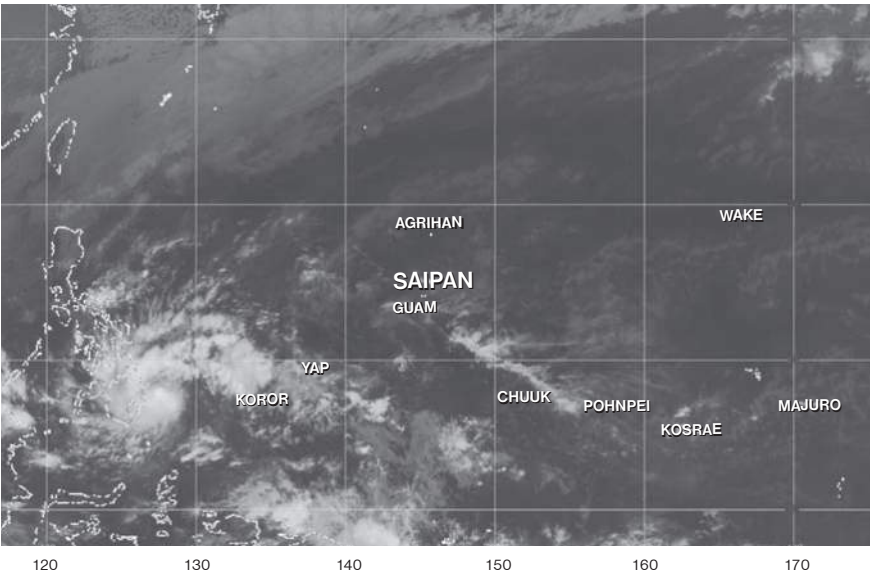
Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲ 63 ▼ 59
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲ 34 ▼ 18
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲ 68 ▼ 58
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲ 80 ▼ 71
London	Mostly Sunny	▲ 39 ▼ 32
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲ 67 ▼ 43
Manila	Thundershowers	▲ 83 ▼ 76
Melbourne	Thundershowers	▲ 76 ▼ 64
Miami	Showers	▲ 79 ▼ 67
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲ 43 ▼ 28
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲ 51 ▼ 40
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲ 39 ▼ 33
Pusan	Cloudy	▲ 45 ▼ 32
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲ 55 ▼ 38
Salem	Sunny	▲ 48 ▼ 36
San Francisco	Sunny	▲ 61 ▼ 45
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 35 ▼ 26
Tokyo	Sunny	▲ 49 ▼ 36
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲ 45 ▼ 30

Tides

Saipan Harbor			
5:54 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
12:52 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
7:27 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.8 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2011
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Tropical storm washi (27W) is now centered well west of Koror near the southern Philippines. Low-level convergence east of Washi is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over Palau and near Yap within 220 miles of a line from 11N130E to 8N136E to 8N141E. For more detailed information on tropical storm Washi (27W), see bulletins issued by the joint Typhoon Warning Center under WMO header WTPN32 PGTW. A surface trough near Chuuk is producing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms southwest of Chuuk within 140 miles of a line from 4N145E to 4N150E. A shear line extends westward from 22N180 to 22N165E. Patchy clouds and showers are found along and up to 130 miles north of this boundary.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Sunday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Monday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Tuesday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Wednesday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	11:47 PM	11:24 AM
Sunday		12:06 PM
Monday	12:43 AM	12:50 PM
Tuesday	1:41 AM	1:38 PM
Wednesday	2:41 AM	2:28 PM

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- **SAMUT SARI**
Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- **TRAVELOGUE**
Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
- To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 6, 2011

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)				ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)			
C05062	2:10am	2:40am	1, 5	C05064	5:15am	5:45am	1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)				ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)			
C05064	4:15am	4:50am	1, 5	C05062	3:10am	3:45am	1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
C05070	4:15am	5:45am	1, 5 via ROP	C05062	2:10am	3:45am	1, 5 via ROP
C05070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7	C05069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
C05068	8:25am	9:15am	Daily	C05071	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C05074	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7	C05073	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05076	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7	C05075	1:40pm	2:30pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C05078	6:50pm	7:40pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7	C05077	5:30pm	6:20pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05078	7:00pm	7:50pm	3, 6	C05077	5:40pm	6:30pm	3, 6
C05072	9:55pm	10:45pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7	C05079	8:35pm	9:25pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05072	10:05pm	10:55pm	3, 6	C05079	8:45pm	9:35pm	3, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL287	6:00am	8:35am	Daily	DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL297	4:35pm	7:20pm	Daily	DL288	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1	OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily	OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
OZ608	3:35am	7:05am	4, 7	OZ607	9:00pm	2:20am+1	3, 6
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)				GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6	3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7	3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN	OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	DL172/288	8:00am	1:15am+1	Daily via NRT
			via ICN	C0190/5077	10:55am	6:30pm	3, 6 via GUM
C05070/191	4:35am	9:45am	3, 6 via GUM	C0190/5079	10:55am	9:35pm	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:00am	10:25pm	Daily via NRT	OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
C05068/183	8:25am	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM	OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
C05068/183	8:25am	9:40pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	PR110/C05071	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM				
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:40pm	1, 4, 7 via GUM	C0192/5071	10:25pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
			via GUM	C0184/5071	11:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
C05076/193	3:10pm	11:00pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau	C0184/5071	11:59pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN				
C05072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM				
C05072/PR111	10:05pm	7:50am+1	3, 6 via GUM				
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN	OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	1, 2, 4, 6 via ICN
			via ICN	OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
C05076/179	3:10pm	10:25pm	1, 5 via GUM	OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ604/723	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN				
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN	C0180/5071	11:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5 via GUM
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana				ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The <i>Saipan Tribune</i> is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)			

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan							
FRE 1750	17:50	18:20	Daily	Tinian-Saipan			
Saipan-Rota				FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
Saipan-Rota	10:20	10:45	Daily	FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily				



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

SCHEDULE OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES			
CATHOLIC 			
Mt. Carmel Cathedral Sunday Mass: 6am Chamorro, 9am English, 11am Filipino and 6pm English Monday-Saturday: 6am Chamorro Wednesday: 6pm Chamorro Parish office hours: Monday-Saturday 8am-12pm, 12-1pm, 1-5pm			
Korean Center Sunday: 10:30am Wednesday: 10am Thursday-Friday: 8pm Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm			
Kristo Rai Parish Sunday- Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6am and 6pm (PH Novena 5:45pm) Friday: 5:30pm praying of Divine Mercy Chaplet; 6pm devotional mass in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Saturday: 6am and 6pm (anticipated) Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am 6pm Tagalog mass Parish office hours: (Fr. Celso G. Magbanua) Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 8-11:30am/ 3-5:30pm, Wednesday and Friday 3-5pm. Telephone no. 285-0273			
Santa Soledad Mission Parish Monday: 6pm Tuesday: 6pm Wednesday: 6pm Friday: 6pm Saturday: 6pm (Youth mass/ anticipated Sunday mass) Sunday: 7am and 9am (Children's mass) Parish office hours: Wednesday and Friday: 8-10am, Saturday: 4-6pm Telephone no. 256-4568			
Saint Jude Parish Monday- Friday: 6pm Saturday: 7am Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am Parish office hours: Monday-Friday 9:30-11:30am, 3:30-5pm Office is close every Thursday and Saturday Telephone no. 288-0007			
San Antonio Parish Monday-Friday 6pm Saturday: 6pm Sunday: 7am, 9am (Blessing of children) Parish office hours: Tuesday-Saturday: 8-11:30am, 2-4:45pm Close on Sunday and Monday			
San Francisco de Borja-Rota Sunday: 6am Chamorro, 8am English Monday and Tuesday: 6am Chamorro Wednesday: 6pm English Thursday: 6am Chamorro Friday: 6am English Saturday: 6am Chamorro, 6pm Tagalog Sunday: anticipated mass			
San Isidro-Rota Sunday: 5am, 8am, 10am Monday-Friday: 7pm Saturday: 5am and 7pm			
San Jose (Oleai) Parish Monday- Saturday: 6am daily mass Monday- Sunday: 3pm Divine Mercy Chaplet Wednesday: 6pm, mass, exposition of the blessed sacrament Saturday: 6pm, anticipated Sunday mass Sunday: 7:30-9am English, 6pm Tagalog mass Office hours: Monday-Wednesday: 9am-12pm, 2-5pm Thursday: day off Friday- Saturday: 8am-12pm, 2-5pm Telephone no. 234-6991			
San Roque Parish Sunday: 7:30am Chamorro, 9am English Monday: 6pm English Tuesday: 6pm English Wednesday: 6pm English- novena mass to our Lady of San Roque oil Thursday: 6pm English Friday: 6pm English- Devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus (First Fridays) Saturday: 6am English- Our Lady's			
Saturday mass for the intentions of the Men and Women in military service, 6pm English- anticipated mass Parish office hours: daily except Thursday and Sundays: 4:30-6pm Telephone no. 322-2404, Fr. Bong's cell: 285-912, Diocesan Finance office: 234-3000 ext.143			
San Vicente Parish Monday-Friday: 6pm, Saturday: 6pm (First Saturday of every month) Sunday: 6am anticipated mass, 6pm (Neo Catechumenal community mass), 8pm Sunday: 6am, 9am, 6pm Parish office hours: daily 9-11am Telephone no. 235-8208 or 287-0131			
Santa Remedios Sunday: 8am Monday: 6pm (1 st Mondays cemetery masses at 5:30pm) Tuesday- Friday: 6pm Saturday: 6pm-anticipated Sunday mass 8-10pm Parish office hours: Monday- Friday: 8:30am-12pm			
PROTESTANT 			
Amen Church Sunday : 10am, 1pm, 5pm Wednesday : 7pm Friday Prayer : 9pm Bible Study : 4pm (Tue) Music Practice : 5pm (Sat) Korean class: 3:30pm (Thu) Visitation : 10am (Fri, Sat) Outreach : 8am (First Sat) Tel. No. 285-2121, 256-2221 Email : oseyo@daum.net			
Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am Sunday School for Children: 10-11am Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm			
Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan Sunday School: 9am Sunday Morning Worship: 10am Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm Telephone no. 234-6026/27			
Chinese Christian Church of Saipan Worship Services: Sunday: Chinese and Filipino 9am, English 6pm Bible Study: Wednesday and Saturday 8pm Telephone no. 235-8540			
Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan Morning Service, Sunday, 10:00 am Evening Service, Sunday, 6:00 pm Children Sunday School, 10:00am/ 6:00 pm Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, 7-9 pm Youth Night of Worship, Friday, 6:30 pm As Perdido Road Chalan Piao, Saipan MP 96950 Tel. No. (670) 235-8590 Email: cornerstone@cfemcares.org			
Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan St. Paul's Episcopal Church Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am Place: Garapan, Plumeria Road, Call 285-6081 for directions			
Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan Sunday Worship Service: 9-11am Sunday school/ Children's church 9am (nursery available during Sunday service) GBI Classes: 4-6pm Prayer Meeting: 6am Tuesday GCA Kagman, Wednesday Navy Hill, Thursday San Antonio Home Cell Bible Study: 7pm (Through out the week) Telephone no. 322-5680			
Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan Wednesday: 7:45pm (English) Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm			
(Tagalog) Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog) Sunday: 6:45am (English) Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)			
Immanuel United Methodist Church Chalan Kanoa Drive, Chalan Kanoa (east of Town Center and Beach Road, Near Mt. Carmel Cathedral) Worship Service: 9:00am Children's Sunday School: 9:00am Choir Practice: 8:00am Singspiration: 8:30am Prayer, Care & Share: Wednesday 7:00pm Pastor: Millie Carroll 322-6158			
Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation) Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal 8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog) 9:15am-Sunday School Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group 8:00pm-Prayer Meeting Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church) Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage) (Korean Congregation) Sunday worship: 9am, 10:30, 1pm Wednesday evening service: 8pm Daily morning prayer: 5am			
Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan Sunday English Service: 7:30-9am, Sunday Tagalog Service: 9-11am and 6-8pm, Wednesday: 7:30-9pm			
Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan Sunday School: 9:20am Sunday Adult: 11am Sunday Evening: 7:30pm Wednesday: 8pm			
Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan Sunday Worship Service: 10am-12noon Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)			
Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan English Worship Service: 9-10:30am Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm English Sunday School: 11am-12pm Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm Wednesday Prayer Meeting: English, 7pm-8pm Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm			
Missions Connection Ministry Every Sunday Celebrations: 10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog) Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm Youth Impact Friday: 7pm Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm			
Northern Marianas Christian Church Sunday Worship Service: 10 am at Seventh Day Adventist church on Quartermaster Rd. Wednesday Service: 7 pm at Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 Contact Nick for more info: 287-1661			
Marianas Bible Fellowship Center Sunday School: 9-9:30am Divine Worship: 9:30-11am Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm			
Pentecostal Missionary Church of Christ (4th Watch) Sunday worship 8:30am Sunday evening 7:00pm Prayer meeting, every Wednesday 7:30pm San Jose village, after San Jose Hotel Telephone: 789-7566			
Saipan Christian Church Sunday: 7:30am-10am			
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting) Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)			
Saipan Church of Christ Sunday Bible Class: 9am Sunday Worship: 10am Sunday Worship English: 10-11am Sunday Worship Tagalog: 6-7pm Thursday Bible Study: 7pm			
Saipan Community Church (Sunday Services) Palau Service: 7:30am-9am English Service: 10am-11:30am Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm			
Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan (Saturday Church Services) Sabbath School Program: 9-10am Lesson Study: 10-10:40am Divine Service: 11-12pm Visitation: 3-4pm Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm Sundown Worship: 6-7pm			
First Baptist Church Koblerville Sunday services: Sunday school 9:00am Morning worship 10:00am Evening service 6:00pm Wednesday evening bible study 7:00pm			
Chinese services Sunday morning 10:00am Sunday evening 7:00pm			
Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. Telephone No: 285-4661/2			
Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center Phone 234-0209 New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches. Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi			
Service Times Sunday 10:00am Worship Service Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service Saturday 10:00am Evangelism			
Upper Room International Ministries Sunday 5:30am-6:30am Morning prayer 7am-9am English service 7am-9am Sunday school 10am-12noon English service, Koblerville Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church Gualo Rai, Saipan			
Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church Sunday School: 9:30am Sunday AM Worship: 10:30am Sunday PM Worship: 7:00am Wed Worship: 7:30pm Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S			
Victorious Christian Church (Formerly God's Victorious Army) Sunday 8:30am to 10:30am - Worship Service Monday 7:00 pm - Women's Fellowship Tuesday nights - Home cellgroup Wednesday - 7:30pm to 9:00pm Mid Week Service Friday 7:30pm to 9:00pm Prayer Meeting Saturday nights - Praise and worship practice Last Friday of the month - Overnight praying meeting Pastor Brendon Perez - Tel# 2359246			

Editor's Note: Information subject to change without prior notice. All information provided by the respective churches. If you want your church or religious activities included or to report changes and errors, call *Saipan Tribune* at 235-6397 or 235-2440 or email editor@saipantribune.com.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 17, 2001

CPA empowered to certify firefighters
The National Pro-Board Committee on Accreditation voted to make the Commonwealth Ports Authority a certification agency for fire and emergency personnel. CPA Airport Rescue and Firefighting Chief Stanley Torres Jr. said this would make Saipan a training hub for fire and emergency personnel throughout the region. It gives the CPA the power to certify fire and emergency personnel using the National Fire Protection Association standards beginning December 6, 2001. The ports authority will open the certification program to fire and emergency organizations within the Western Pacific region that may wish to be certified under the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications, Torres said.

Hopwood says no to drugs
The Hopwood Junior High School community believes that acknowledging its existence is the first step that should be taken to effectively solve the campus' drug problems. Principal David Borja, during Hopwood's annual Drug Free March Friday, conceded that staging the anti-drug rally is one way of showing the school's efforts in combating the serious social and health threat especially affecting its young students. "To me, it's very important that we continue to make a very public and open statement to the community. It is our small of saying that we need to do something about the drug use, and the prevention of family and domestic violence. It's important that we communicate that we are part of the community and we need their help," said Borja.

Dec. 17, 2002

Humanitarian spirit shines in NMI
The spirit of humanitarianism reigned on Saipan over the week-end with hundreds of residents-and even tourists-generously donating all the relief items they could spare for the benefit of supertyphoon victims on Rota and Guam. Kind-hearted families and individuals offered foodstuffs, sleeping amenities and other necessities at drop-off booths set up by the House of Representatives and the Legislative Bureau throughout Saipan since Saturday. Volunteer relief workers from the government were awed by the overwhelming response that the special project-dubbed "Saipan Cares"-drew from the community.

NMHC pumps in \$30M to economy
The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation has pumped in more than \$30 million in to the local economy, even if it failed to meet its target of financing a thousand housing units by the turn of the new millennium. Since its creation in 1994, NMHC Executive Director MaryLou S. Ada said the agency, a subsidiary corporation of the Commonwealth Development Authority, has, so far, financed and built 754 housing units throughout the Northern Marianas. Its most recent project was the 45-unit Tototville in Koblerville, which was completed in 2001, more than one year since construction started in late 1999. The housing project also involved the construction of equally important infrastructure facilities like roads and sewerlines.

Dec. 17, 2003

OPA denies protest on fuel supply contract
The Office of the Public Auditor has denied the appeal filed by Pacific Petroleum Corp., saying it has no standing to protest the decision of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to award a \$72-million fuel supply contract to Mobil Corp. In its 15-page decision released to the media Monday, the OPA cited 12 reasons for turning down Pacific Petroleum's appeal, including its being not an actual or prospective bidder or offeror and its failure to conform to the requirements of CUC's request for proposal. The RFP was related to the supply of fuel to CUC's power plants on Saipan, Tinian and Rota. Pacific Petroleum is the designated CNMI representative of SK Shipping, a Korean firm.

Cohen: Investment confab results won't be immediate
Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Interior David B. Cohen said Monday that his office is now busy doing follow-up work on investors who had expressed interest during last September's investment conference in Washington D.C. He conceded, though, that the process-and results-could take some time, as investment decisions have to go through the corporate tier of command. "I know that a number of the presentations were well received, especially on education, and we had a subsequent follow-up in Tokyo, where we attempted to entice Japanese investors to invest in the CNMI," he said.

Maharlika

Catholic faithful start Simbang Gabi



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Some officers of the Filipino community pose for a group photo during the first day of Simbang Gabi, or dawn mass, at the Mount Carmel Church on early morning of Dec. 16.

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Hundreds of Filipino Catholics on Saipan flocked to churches as they began the longstanding tradition of Simbang Gabi or dawn mass as part of their Christmas celebration.

Mount Carmel Cathedral was full to capacity early Friday morning as throngs of those who believe that their wishes will be fulfilled if they attend the dawn masses for nine days or up until Christmas Eve.

The first few days are the ones that see the most number of attendees, said Saipan Simbang Gabi Group president Mar Pacson.

The turnout of the first dawn mass, Pacson said, is a testament that many Filipinos and the rest of Catholic faithful still depend profoundly on their belief in God.

"Despite the challenging situation

in the CNMI, given the fact that there are a lot of Filipinos who have been put to the test due to immigration issues, many of us turn to God for help," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Reasons for hearing these dawn masses vary from one person to another. For labor representative Carmelina Velasquez, her wish is "to have peace more than anything else."

Velasquez, who has been attending dawn masses for the second consecutive year, said her wish for peace encompasses not just her own family but everybody in the community.

"For my own family and myself, I wish for good health and peace of mind," she said.

Former UFO president Olive Yana, for her part, said she tries as much as she can to complete all of nine dawn masses.

Her wish, Yana said, is for good life for all foreign workers in the

Commonwealth.

"I really hope that we get a status that all longtime foreign workers in the CNMI deserve. After giving our best years for this island which has become our second home, I wish that we receive what is due us," said Yana.

According to Yana, dawn masses bring the message of hope for all those who believe.

"It is with hope that we await and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ," she added.

SSGG school building project

This message of hope rings true for another town which the Saipan Simbang Gabi Group intends to help this 2012.

Saipan Simbang Gabi Group is a non-profit corporation created to start the Christmas tradition as well as address classroom shortage in the Philippines by raising more funds during the holidays to build more classrooms for

public schools.

Pacson said that for next year, they are targeting to build a two-storey school building in Sta. Maria, Ilocos Sur.

Given the economic situation in the islands, however, Pacson said their group won't be as persistent in their dawn mass collections which used to augment the needed funds for the project.

He said the dawn masses' second collections this year will be donated to the church and be used to buy their needed supplies.

Pacson said they will just rely on their usual sponsors and donors who have supported the program through the years.

He also thanked the members of the Saipan Simbang Gabi Group, coordinators and other volunteers who have also worked hard to set up the nativity at Mount Carmel during the first week of December.

All set for Paskong Pinoy today

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Individuals and groups are encouraged to join the various competitions during the Paskong Pinoy 2011 event.

The annual Christmas event organized by the United Filipino Organization will be held today at the Paseo de Marianas from 4pm to 10pm.

Olive Yana, UFO adviser and event committee co-chair, said yesterday that slots are still open for the individual singing contest for children 6 to 12 years old and for adults, the choral group contest, and the lantern making contest.

Yana said cash prizes await the contest winners. Individual singing winners will take home \$100 first prize, \$75 for second prize, and \$50 for third prize. Group winners will take home \$200 for the first place, \$100 second place, and \$50 third place.

For the lantern making contest, prizes are \$250 for first place, \$150 second place, and \$75 third place.

"We invite everyone to join the contests for a chance to win our cash prizes," Yana told *Saipan Tribune*.

Today's event, Yana said, will also feature several performing artists and about 40 food and non-food vendors.

Yana added that they have invited a number of dignitary at the event.

UFO president Bong Malasarte, for his part, encouraged the entire community, especially Filipinos, to take part in the Christmas celebration.

While he noted that times have been challenging for the whole CNMI community, Malasarte said the public should still think about the many blessings they received, a good enough reason to be thankful this holiday.

"No matter how simple our celebration will be, we should put in mind the real meaning of Christmas and the lessons it teaches us," added Malasarte.

Philippines arrests 96th suspect in 2009 massacre

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Police say a man working as a hospital security guard has been arrested as the 96th suspect in a 2009 massacre in the southern Philippines that left at least 57 people dead and became the country's worst political killing.

Police said Friday that they were tipped off to Sahid Guimadel's identity by his brother, who is seeking a reward offered by authorities for the capture of any of the more than 100 suspects still at large.

Leaders of a politically powerful clan and several of their lieutenants have been put on trial over the massacre.

They are accused of leading an ambush of a convoy and killing at least 57 people, including political opponents and media workers who accompanied them.

Police Director Samuel Pagdilao said Guimadel was arrested Wednesday at the Cotabato Provincial Hospital.

Computer group celebrates 5th anniversary

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
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REPORTER

The Saipan Building and Fixing Computer Users Group marked its fifth anniversary with a get-together among its officers and members at the Chalan Kanoa Beach Club last Dec. 3.

Established in Dec. 8, 2006, the group is comprised of some 200 members who have graduated from the Building and Fixing Computer Class offered by the Philippine Consulate General through the Philippine Overseas Labor Office.

Over 50 members attended the annual celebration which served as an opportunity to recognize the group's most recent members to become certified computer technicians, said group founder Mar V. Masilungan of White Coconut Computer Services.

The 2011 Saipan Building and Fixing Computer Users Group officers are chairman Zaldy Quebral; vice chair Edmin Elayda, secretary Angel Deliva, assistant secretary Chu Calinahan, treasurer Marilyn Quebral, assistant treasurer Rolan Conde, auditor Carlos Cortez, web administrator Jun Florentino, liaison officer Alex Racoma, and advisers Cris Hilario, Jousel Regilme, Amado Tumbaga, and Masilungan.

Masilungan, who is a test administrator for the Electronics Technicians Association out of Indiana, said 13 members of Batch 8 took and passed the certification exam last May.

According to Masilungan, a total of



CLARISSA V. DAVID

Members of the Saipan Building and Fixing Computer Users Group pose for a group photo during their fifth anniversary celebration held at the Chalan Kanoa Beach Club last Dec. 3. The event, which recognized 13 members who recently became certified technicians, was also the farewell party for the group's treasurer, Marilyn Quebral.

47 members of their group who did not take up a computer course in college are now certified technicians.

"Some of them are my competitors already and I'm proud of that. They were all under my classes," said the POLO volunteer instructor.

This year, Masilungan said, was challenging for the group as many of the members had to deal with and were affected by the immigration issues in the CNMI.

He noted, though, that some members of the Batch 9 class will review for the certification exam next year.

"The purpose of the group is to help those who want to be certified technicians through review classes and practice tests. Once they pass the practice test, they're most likely to pass the actual certification exam," Masilungan

told *Saipan Tribune*.

Masilungan said the group has a lot of things to look forward to in 2012, including an instructional video and a conference that will discuss modern technology in related industries.

He disclosed that the group plans by next year to work on an instructional video in Filipino about troubleshooting computer problems, which will then be uploaded to YouTube.

Masilungan said the video will be beneficial to former and future students of the Building and Fixing Computers course.

The group founder also revealed about their plans to host a conference which will feature IT experts discussing the latest technology and will serve as another learning tool for the group.

"I thank all our members for staying

connected even after they finished the course and for being focused on what the group would like to accomplish. We are grateful to the many certified technicians who are now willing to train new members. Their untiring support is overwhelming," said Masilungan.

The anniversary celebration coincided with the farewell party for another POLO volunteer computer instructor and the group's treasurer, Marilyn Quebral, who moved to Pohnpei on Dec. 4 to work as IT manager for the Federated States of Micronesia Social Security Office.

"We are very proud to say that she is one of the products of our group whose vision is to produce more IT professionals from among our members," said Masilungan.

Tebow was here? Superstar still unknown in PH city of his birth

By MARTIN ROGERS
YAHOO! SPORTS

There isn't any Tebowing going on in Makati City, the sprawling municipality in the Philippines that was the unlikely birthplace for the most talked-about athlete in the United States. Not yet, anyway.

Tim Tebow's season, from the series of extraordinary fourth-quarter comebacks to his cult-figure status as a true believer, has been remarkable in every way.

Yet back where the journey began 24 years ago, the spread of the Tebow phenomenon is still to happen. Basketball and boxing are the sports of choice in Makati, and news of the Denver Broncos' 7-1 ride on the shoulders of a talismanic Tebow hasn't generated any buzz.

"Tee-bone?" said Makati government official Mila Gonzalez in a telephone conversation with ThePostGame.com. "How do you spell that?"

Tebow's parents, Bob and Pamela, were working as Baptist missionaries in the Philippines when their son was born in the Makati Medical Center on Aug. 14, 1987. Pamela Tebow was advised to have an abortion after suffering from a pathogenic amoeba but decided to go through with the birth despite the risks of her son being stillborn.

Tebow spent the first three years of his life in the Philippines and has returned on charitable and religious missions every year since he was 15 years old.

"I will always have a special place in my heart for the country where I was born," he said recently.

Given the amount of focus trained upon Tebow since his latest Sunday miracle, spearheading the apparently buried Broncos to a 13-10 overtime triumph over the Chicago Bears, you might have thought Makati, one of the 17 cities that make up the Filipino capital of Manila, would have latched onto the cultural bandwagon.

But Gonzalez, one of six government officials contacted for this story, noted that not one person at Makati City Hall so much as recognized Tebow's name.

"No one here has heard of him," said Gonzalez. "Is he a current player? Of course it is exciting for us now you have told us about this, and we will look it up. If someone from our

city is successful it is something for us to celebrate. I am sure once people begin to realize he is from Makati they will start to follow him in his sporting endeavors."

Makati offers a fascinating snapshot of Filipino life. Part of the district forms the financial hub of the Philippines, complete with skyscrap-

ers and billion-dollar fiscal institutions. However, just a couple of miles away and within the same district are slum areas where Tebow's parents worked to provide aid and spiritual guidance for the locals.

Yet, even the most passionate of local sports fans have yet to be touched by the Tebow hype that has engulfed the U.S.

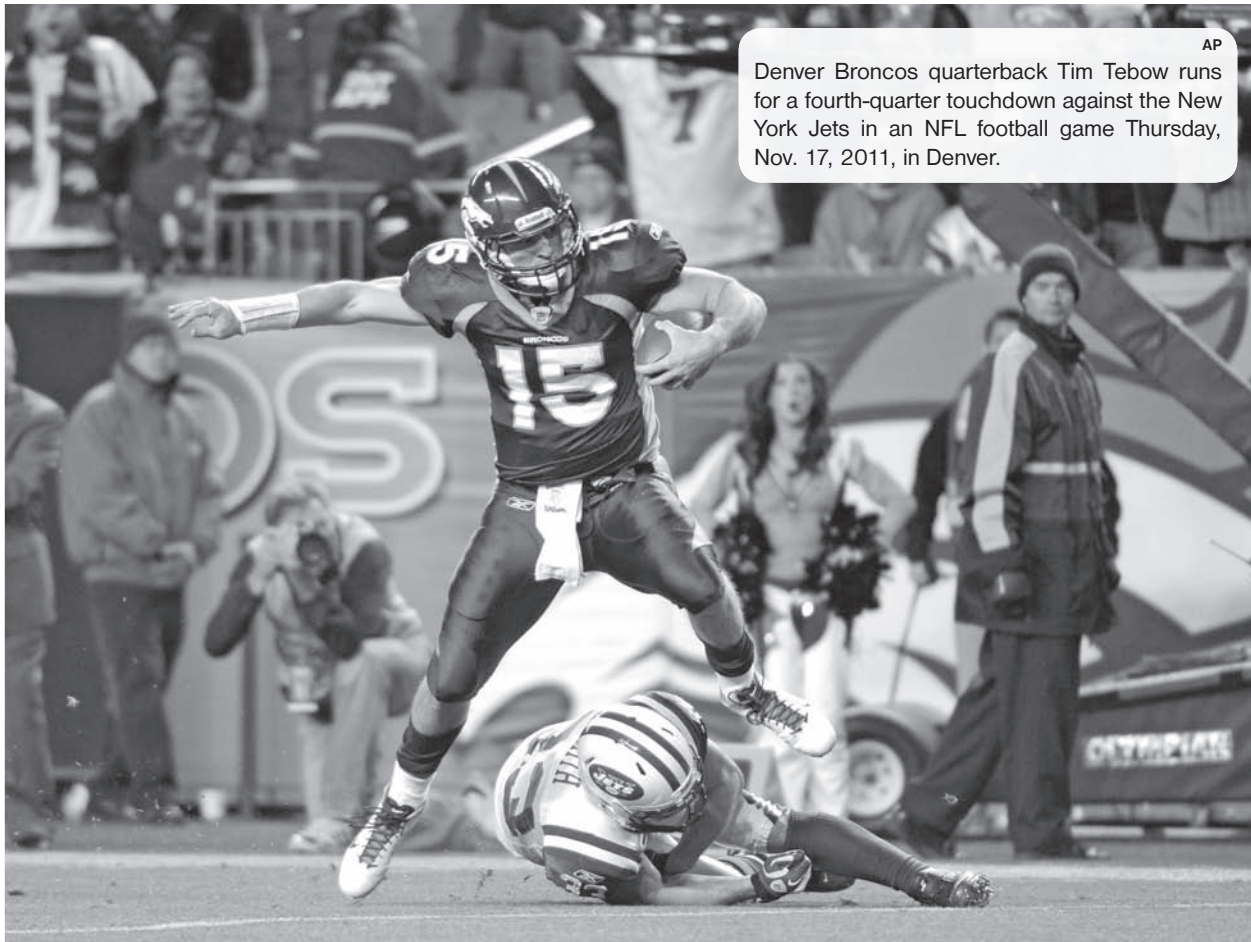
"Basketball is the biggest sport that we follow; we don't know much about American sports apart from that," Makati contractor Jerry Araneta said. "I only know of O.J. Simpson, for obvious reasons. Oh, and Brett Favre. There is a poster of him in my favorite bar. But not Tim Tebow, I don't know him."

That may change soon, especially if Tebow's fame and form continue to surge. Two Manila newspapers are planning stories on the quarterback this week, and Filipino state television is sending a crew to the Broncos' showdown against the New England Patriots on Sunday.

Tebow continues his family's mission work, and his foundation has combined with renowned charity CURE International to build a state-of-the-art hospital in the troubled region of Davao that will provide reconstructive surgery for children suffering from deformities.

Funding for the \$3.1 million project is nearly 80 percent complete, and it is expected that Tebow will be present at the groundbreaking ceremony in January.

Unless, of course, the weekly escape acts continue into the post-season.



AP
Denver Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow runs for a fourth-quarter touchdown against the New York Jets in an NFL football game Thursday, Nov. 17, 2011, in Denver.

By RODEL RODIS
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Telltale signs: The loyalty of Chief Justice Corona

Friends and foes may not agree on anything about recently impeached Chief Justice Renato Corona except that that his most notable quality is loyalty. Unfortunately, as his detractors will point out, the Encyclopedia Britannica's definition of loyalty is "allegiance, personal devotion and reverence to the sovereign" and further expounds that "one who is loyal, in the feudal sense of fealty, is one who has full legal rights as a consequence of faithful allegiance." They will argue that Corona's "full legal rights" to be appointed as Chief Justice, even though in clear violation of established precedents against such midnight appointments, is precisely a "consequence of faithful allegiance."

Loyalty is sometimes viewed as a virtue on par with honesty and integrity. Others may even argue, as Josiah Royce did in his 1908 book, *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, that it is even more valued. Royce considers loyalty "the heart of all the virtues, the central duty amongst all the duties...the basic moral principle from which all other principles can be derived."

In her book, "Shadow of Doubt: Probing the Supreme Court", Maritess Danguilan Vitug wrote that in all his years on the Supreme Court, "Corona's loyalty to the appointing power was indisputable. He consistently voted for President Arroyo in a number of politically consequential cases."

President Noyon Aquino expressed his frustration at Corona's loyalty to his "sovereign" in a speech at a Criminal Justice Summit held in Manila on Dec. 5 where he listed 19 cases involving Arroyo where Corona supported her position in all them.

One example he cited was his plan to set up a Truth Commission, modeled after what Nelson Mandela did in South Africa, to investigate charges of corruption against the Arroyo administration. Because Arroyo had appointed Merceditas Gutierrez as Ombudsman and she had made it clear that no criminal investigation of the Arroyos would prosper during her watch (which would cover much of Aquino's presidential term), this was the most that Aquino could hope for. Even though it would be a "toothless" body without the power to even subpoena witnesses, it would have been an annoyance to Arroyo.

No problem. Corona's Supreme Court immediately ruled that Aquino's creation of a Truth Commission was unconstitutional.

When Aquino's Secretary of Justice, Leila De Lima, issued a hold order to prevent the departure of Arroyo because criminal charges were about to be filed against her, Corona's Supreme Court immediately issued a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) to void the hold order of De Lima.

What was especially galling to Aquino was that the Supreme Court had scheduled a full hearing on the legality of De Lima's hold departure order against Arroyo for Nov. 22. Corona had even reportedly traveled to San Francisco for a vacation expecting to return in time for the Nov. 22 hearing. But when Arroyo decided that she could not wait until Nov. 22 as the Aquino government would have filed the charges against her by then, an emergency "ex parte" TRO application was made to the Supreme Court for immediate action on Nov. 15.

Corona had to immediately cut his vacation short in order to accommodate Arroyo's request for a special hearing. Without bothering to hear the government's position on the Arroyo motion, Corona and seven other Arroyo appointed justices granted the TRO requested by Arroyo.

The Supreme Court majority imposed three conditions before the TRO could be effective. Before she met the conditions, Arroyo was already at the airport ready to leave Manila barely hours after Corona's court had issued the TRO. De Lima refused to accept the legality of the TRO because the conditions imposed by the Court had not yet been met by Arroyo. Corona's spokesman, Midas Marquez, announced that for the first time in the history of legal jurisprudence, the TRO was ef-

fective even if the conditions required for it to be issued had not yet been met.

Why is Corona so fiercely loyal to Arroyo?

In her probing book about the Supreme Court, Vitug wrote: "Among Justices, when he is relaxed, Corona can be quite open. He once told some of his colleagues that President Arroyo took care of his hospital bill when he underwent an operation to ease his bad back. He was already on the Court then."

After Arroyo appointed him to the Supreme Court in 2002, he told *Newsbreak* in a taped interview about the rewards he reaped as Arroyo's chief of staff when she assumed the presidency. "When you're a Malacanang official, it just takes one call. If there's an emergency case and you really need an operation, you can call the Heart Center and you're really prioritized." (Corona had a coronary bypass in 1995).

Corona has another reason to be grateful. On March 23, 2007, Arroyo appointed his wife, Maria Cristina Roco Corona, as a member of the Board of the John Hay Management Corporation (JHMC) which Arroyo created by Executive Order in 2002. According to the *Baguio Sun Star* news report on June 6, 2011, the John Hay firm incurred a P2.6 billion (\$60 million) debt for a 2008 lease of 247 hectares in the John Hay Special Economic Zone in

Baguio City.

Mrs. Corona was appointed to the John Hay Board over the objections of JHMC board members, management and rank-and-file employees who accused her of acts of misconduct and negligence and opposed her election as director and president.

According to Rep. Jesus Remulla, instead of acting on the complaints, President Arroyo "instructed all members of the JHMC to tender their courtesy resignations immediately. After the resignations, Mrs. Corona was retained and even promoted after President Arroyo expressed her desire for Mrs. Corona's election as OIC Chairman of the JHMC Board."

But Corona is not the only Arroyo appointee to the Supreme Court to express his gratitude to the "feudal lord" who appointed him. Justice Mariano Del Castillo, the justice known for plagiarism who was appointed by Arroyo in 2009, has also expressed his deep gratitude to Arroyo.

After he went through a quintuple bypass in 2007, Del Castillo needed a second opinion. To accommodate his need, President Arroyo flew in noted heart surgeon Dr. Alex Yap from San Francisco to provide it to him.

To express his gratitude, Del Castillo wrote a letter to the *Philippine Star* praising Arroyo: "Her single indiscriminate act of kindness in my momen-

tary blow is something of eternal value, let alone something that highlights how admirable she is. She may be marred by shrill criticisms and accusations because of some unpopular decisions and boo-boos, but as we all are, she is only human prone to mistakes."

Knowing of what Arroyo also did for fellow justice Corona, Del Castillo added: "I can bravely say that surely I am not the only one who had been directly benefited by the personal intervention of the President."

When Arroyo was seeking candidates to appoint as justices to the Philippine Supreme Court, she wanted only those who possessed certain qualities she most admired. At least eight of her SC appointees have proven the wisdom of her choices.

In his 1987 essay, *A Damaged Culture*, James Fallows wrote about how Filipinos pride themselves about their lifelong loyalty. "When observing Filipino friendships, I thought often of the Mafia families portrayed in *The Godfather*: total devotion to those within the circle, total war on those outside."

Chief Justice Corona has exhibited his total devotion to former President Arroyo and those within his circle and his total war on President Aquino and those outside of it. The Godmother is quite pleased.

Send comments to Rodel50@aol.com or mail them to the Law Offices of Rodel Rodis at 2429 Ocean Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94127 or call 415.34.7800.

Samu't Sari



SENIOR CAROLERS
Several lawmakers pose with some of the congregates at the Aging Center after the visiting group sang Christmas carols at the House Chamber yesterday morning.

CLARISSA A. DAVID



Ten senior citizens spread the holiday joy by singing Christmas carols to the lawmakers and their staff at the House Chamber in Capitol Hill yesterday. The group was accompanied by Aging Center program coordinator Walter Manglona and staffer Alex Laniyo.

CLARISSA A. DAVID



BIRTHDAY AND BAPTISM
Christian James A. Moises was baptized at the Kristo Rai Church last Dec. 3 and celebrated his first birthday shortly after at Gourmet Restaurant. Welcome to the Christian world and happy birthday from Dad Ernie, Mom April, and older brother Ernesto.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & SOCIAL MEDIA
The Northern Marianas College's Information Technology Department along with participants from the Department of Public Safety, Department of Homeland Security, and Emergency Management Office during a recently held video teleconference training titled "Social Media for Natural Disaster Response and Recovery." The training, which was sponsored by the National Disaster Preparedness Training Center of the University of Hawaii, focused on the use of social media in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



TINIAN PROMOTES LITERACY
Nine parents recently completed the Motherhead Family Literacy Program at the Head Start Center on Tinian. Graduates are pictured here with their program trainers Evelyn Evangelista and Lorna Hofschneider, Motherhead program coordinator Viola S. Deleon Guerrero, and Northern Marianas Humanities Council board member Don Farrell. The Humanities Council invites Tinian parents wishing to enroll in the Motherhead course to contact Evelyn Evangelista at 433-9253 or Lou Connie Manglona at 433-9251.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



RECITAL
Li'l Hands School of Music piano teacher Joyce Dimaun poses with student Maxine Rabago after the "Christmas In Our Hearts" recital last Dec. 4 at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE



MARITAL BLISS
Happy 15th wedding anniversary to Josephine and Apolinario Valiente. Greeting from family and friends.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT
Happy 2nd birthday Anthony Noel Taisacan Arriola! We thank the good Lord everyday for bringing you into our lives and are very blessed. We love you Tonton! Love, Daddy, Mommy, Papa, MomMom, Nina, and Uncle Don.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Business

Anonymous donors pay off Kmart layaway accounts

OMAHA, Neb. (AP)—The young father stood in line at the Kmart layaway counter, wearing dirty clothes and worn-out boots. With him were three small children

He asked to pay something on his bill because he knew he wouldn't be able to afford it all before Christmas. Then a mysterious woman stepped up to the counter. "She told him, 'No, I'm paying for it,'" recalled Edna Deppe, assistant manager at the store in Indianapolis. "He just stood there and looked at her and then looked at me and asked if it was a joke. I told him it wasn't, and that she was going to pay for him. And he just busted out in tears."

At Kmart stores across the country, Santa seems to be getting some help: Anonymous donors are paying off strangers' layaway accounts, buying the Christmas gifts other families couldn't afford, especially toys and children's clothes set aside by impoverished parents.

Before she left the store Tuesday evening, the Indianapolis woman in her mid-40s had paid the layaway orders for as many as 50 people. On the way out, she handed out \$50 bills and paid for two carts of toys for a woman in line at the cash register.

"She was doing it in the memory of her husband who had just died, and she said she wasn't going to be able to spend



Kevin, center, Jolie, right, and Alex Lewis shop for a family they adopted for Christmas, Thursday Dec 15, 2011 at a Kmart in Omaha, Neb. The Lewises had their layaway paid off at Kmart by an unknown good Samaritan.

it and wanted to make people happy with it," Deppe said. The woman did not identify herself and only asked people to "remember Ben," an apparent reference to her husband.

Deppe, who said she's worked in retail for 40 years, had never seen anything like it. "It was like an angel fell out of the sky and appeared in our store," she said.

Most of the donors have done their giving secretly.

Dona Bremser, an Omaha nurse, was at work when a

Kmart employee called to tell her that someone had paid off the \$70 balance of her layaway account, which held nearly \$200 in toys for her 4-year-old son.

"I was speechless," Brem-

ser said. "It made me believe in Christmas again."

Dozens of other customers have received similar calls in Nebraska, Michigan, Iowa, Indiana and Montana.

The benefactors generally ask to help families who are squirreling away items for young children. They often pay a portion of the balance, usually all but a few dollars or cents so the layaway

order stays in the store's system.

The phenomenon seems to have begun in Michigan before spreading, Kmart executives said. "It is honestly being driven by people wanting to do a good deed at this time of the year," said Salima Yala, Kmart's division vice president for layaway.

The good Samaritans seem to be visiting mainly Kmart stores, though a Wal-Mart spokesman said a few of his stores in Joplin, Mo., and Chicago have also seen some layaway accounts paid off.

Kmart representatives say they did nothing to investigate the secret Santas or spread word of the generosity. But it's happening as the company struggles to compete with chains such as Wal-Mart and Target.

Kmart may be the focus of layaway generosity, Yala said, because it is one of the few large discount stores that has offered layaway year-round for about four decades. Under the program, customers can make purchases but let the store hold onto their merchandise as they pay it off slowly over several weeks.

Bargainers reach deal to head off govt shutdown

WASHINGTON (AP)—Congressional negotiators reached agreement Thursday on a compromise spending bill to avert a weekend federal shutdown. They also worked toward a deal renewing the payroll tax cut and unemployment benefits for another year but prepared a shorter version as a fallback in case talks fell short.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., told reporters that he was still optimistic that bipartisan talks on year-long extensions of the payroll tax cut and unemployment coverage would succeed. But as a "Plan B," he said, they were also working on

a two-month extension, which would also prevent cuts in Medicare reimbursements for doctors for that period.

"We're still working on the long-term" bill, Reid told reporters as he exited the Capitol after a day of talks over both the payroll tax and spending measures. As for the two-month version, he said, "We'll only do that if what we're working on doesn't work out."

Reid's remarks put a slight damper on a day on which for the first time, Democratic and Republican leaders expressed optimism at prospects for swift compromise on their payroll

tax standoff and a spending battle that had threatened to shutter federal agencies beginning Saturday.

A deal on a \$1 trillion spending bill was reached after Republicans agreed to drop language that would have blocked President Barack Obama's liberalized rules on people who visit and send money to relatives in Cuba. But a GOP provision will stay in the bill thwarting an Obama administration rule on energy efficiency standards that critics argued would make it hard for people to purchase inexpensive incandescent light bulbs.

The House is expected to approve the spending measure Friday, and the Senate could follow suit, possibly the same day.

Bargainers were considering the two-month version of the payroll tax cut and unemployment benefits bill because so far, they haven't reached agreement on how a year-long extension would be paid for, said a Democratic aide who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private talks. The two-month bill would cost \$40 billion, according to the aide, and would let lawmakers revisit the measure after returning to Washington after the holiday season.

Unemployment claims at lowest in 3 1/2 years

WASHINGTON (AP)—The job market is healthier than at any time since the end of the Great Recession.

The number of people filing for unemployment benefits fell last week to the lowest since May 2008, a sign that the waves of corporate layoffs that have defined the past few years are all but over.

"This is unexpectedly great news," said Ian Shepherdson, an economist at High Frequency Economics.

It will take an additional

step—robust hiring, not just the end of layoffs—to bring the 8.6 percent unemployment rate down significantly. Experts say that won't happen until businesses are more confident about customer demand. And the European debt crisis could still cause damage here.

But the report on unemployment claims Thursday was the latest to suggest that the economy, two and a half slow years after the official end of the recession, may finally be picking up momentum.

The nation added 100,000 or more jobs every month from July through November, the first five-month streak since 2006. And the economy, which was barely growing when the year started, has picked up speed each quarter. More small businesses plan to hire than at any time in three years, a trade group said this week. And another private-sector survey found more companies are planning to add workers than at any time since 2008.

The number of people applying for unemployment benefits came in at 366,000, down from 385,000 the week before. That moves the figure closer to its pre-recession range of roughly 280,000 to 350,000.

The last time claims were so low, the nation was six months into the recession but didn't know it yet. The unemployment rate was 5.4 percent—a level almost hard to imagine these days. Unemployment has been above 8 percent for almost three years.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

It's the end of the road for the Ranger pickup

DETROIT (AP)—It's the end of the road for the Ranger in the U.S. Ford is ending production of the smallest pickup it makes, a truck that helped the company battle more fuel-efficient Japanese imports when it was launched in 1982. The last American-made Ranger rolls off the assembly line in Minnesota Friday. After peaking in the mid-1990s, sales of the Ranger have fallen over the last decade, hurt by neglect as Ford focused on more profitable large pickups. The Ranger's styling grew stale, it lost its fuel economy edge and the price wasn't much lower than beefier siblings like the F-150. Other companies aren't so sure it's time to ditch small pickups. Toyota Motor Corp., General Motors Co. and Nissan Motor Co. all plan to continue selling small pickups in the U.S., citing high gas prices and loyal buyers.

RIM: Next-generation phones not out till late 2012

TORONTO (AP)—BlackBerry maker Research In Motion Ltd. said Thursday that new phones deemed critical to the company's future will be delayed until late 2012. Mike Lazaridis, one of the company's co-CEOs, said the BlackBerry 10 phones will need a highly integrated chipset that will not be available until mid-2012, so the company can now expect them to ship late in the year. He disclosed the delay on a conference call with analysts. Analysts say RIM's future depends on the new software platform. RIM needs to come up with a compelling BlackBerry as U.S. users have moved on to flashier touch-screen phones such as Apple's iPhone and various competing models that run Google's Android software.



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
11,868.81	1,215.75	2,541.01
+45.33	+3.93	+1.70
+0.38%	+0.32%	+0.07%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms			
Australian Dollar	1.003	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7812
British Pound	0.6441	Indian Rupee	52.71
Canadian Dollar	1.0326	Indonesian Rupiah	9046.25
Chinese Yuan	6.3538	Japanese Yen	77.8895
Euro	0.7676	Malaysian Ringgit	3.1788
		New Zealand Dollar	1.3164
		Philippine Peso	43.8775
		Singapore Dollar	1.304
		South Korean Won	1158.71
		Swiss Franc	0.9389
		Taiwan Dollar	30.3387
		Thailand Baht	31.34

Nation

Capitol Hill talks yield \$1T spending measure

WASHINGTON (AP)—Republicans yielded on policy affecting communist Cuba and Democrats gave way on new energy standards for light bulbs to seal an agreement Thursday evening on a massive \$1 trillion-plus year-end spending package in time avert a possible government shutdown this weekend.

Under pressure from White House veto threats, House Republicans agreed to drop restrictions on people who visit and send money to relatives in Cuba, while Democrats conceded defeat on a GOP demand to delay energy efficiency standards that critics argued could effectively ban inexpensive incandescent light bulbs. In late stage talks, Democrats also agreed to ban the District of Columbia's government from funding abortions.

These policy issues held up a final agreement on the must-

do spending measure for most of the day. It came barely a day after Republicans said they planned to push the 1,200-plus-page legislation through the House with only GOP votes, which seemed like a bluff considering tea party opposition to the measure.

The measure funds 10 Cabinet agencies, awarding a slight increase to the Pentagon and veterans' programs while trimming most other domestic agencies. It drops most policy provisions sought by GOP conservatives.

Thursday's legislation implements the details of cost caps set under the August debt and budget accord between Republicans and President Barack Obama and adds to earlier agency savings enacted in April. It pays for programs ranging from border security to flood control to combating

AIDS and famine in Africa.

The measure has bipartisan backing but is likely to encounter resistance from conservative tea party lawmakers seeking far more significant cuts to government agencies.

Days after saying that the measure was wrapped up, House Appropriations Committee Chairman Harold Rogers, R-Ky., acknowledged that talks had been reopened, as power lawmakers quarreled over the Cuba provisions and other unresolved issues.

The bill chips away at the Pentagon budget, foreign aid and environmental spending but boosts funding for veterans programs. The Securities and Exchange Commission, responsible for enforcing new regulations under last year's financial overhaul, won a 10 percent budget increase, even as the tax-col-

lecting IRS absorbs more than a 3 percent cut to its budget.

Popular education initiatives for special-needs children and disadvantaged schools were basically frozen and Obama's cherished "Race to the Top" initiative, which provides grants to better-performing schools, would absorb more than a 20

percent cut. The maximum Pell grant for low-income college students would remain at \$5,550, but only after major cost-cutting moves that would limit the number of semesters the grants may be received and make income eligibility standards more strict.

Environmentalists scored

clear wins in stopping virtually every significant GOP initiative to roll back Environmental Protection Agency rules. Most importantly, industry forces seeking to block new greenhouse gas and clean air rules, as well as a new clean water regulation opposed by mountaintop removal mining interests, were denied.

Palm-sized baby among the world's smallest

LOS ANGELES (AP)—At birth, Melinda Star Guido was so tiny she could fit into the palm of her doctor's hand. Weighing just 9 1/2 ounces—less than a can of soda—she is among the smallest babies ever born in the world.

Most infants her size don't survive, but doctors are preparing to send her home by New Year's.

Melinda was born premature at 24 weeks in late August and is believed to be the second-smallest baby to survive in the U.S. and third smallest in the world. She spent the early months cooed in an incubator in the neonatal intensive care unit in Los Angeles.

Despite hurdles, Melinda lived to her original Thursday due date. Doctors say it is too early to say how she will fare developmentally and physically when she grows up.

For now, her 22-year-old mother sits at her bedside almost every day and stays overnight whenever she can.

On Wednesday, Haydee Ibarra caressed Melinda through the portholes of the incubator where nurses pinned up a homemade sign bearing her name. Now 3 1/2 months old and weighing 4 pounds, Melinda gripped Ibarra's pinky finger and yawned.

"Melinda, Melinda," she cooed at her daughter dressed in a polka dot onesie. "You're awake today."

During her pregnancy, Ibarra



AP

14-week-old Melinda Star Guido holds her mother's little finger while lying in an incubator at the Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center in Los Angeles, Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2011.

suffered from high blood pressure, which can be dangerous for mother and fetus. She was transferred from a hospital near her San Fernando Valley home to the county's flagship hospital, which was better equipped to handle high-risk pregnancies.

There was a problem with the placenta, the organ that nourishes the developing fetus. The fetus, however, was not getting proper nutrition, blood and oxygen. Doctors knew Melinda would weigh less than a pound, but they were surprised at how small and fragile she was.

"The first few weeks, it was tough and go. None of us thought the baby was going to make it," said Dr. Rangasamy Ramanathan, who oversees premature infants at the Los Angeles County-USC Medi-

cal Center.

Even if she survived, doctors told Ibarra and her husband Yovani Guido, children born this extremely premature can have developmental delays and impairments such as blindness, deafness or cerebral palsy.

Ibarra, who previously had a stillborn, told doctors to do whatever necessary to help her baby.

"They said, 'We'll take the chance. Please try.' So we said, 'OK we'll try,'" Ramanathan recalled.

Melinda was delivered by cesarean section at 24 weeks and was immediately transferred to the NICU where a team of doctors and nurses kept watch around the clock. Infants born before 37 weeks are considered premature.

Full ban on driver calls could be tough to enforce

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP)—A driver in the next lane is moving his lips. Is he on a hands-free cellphone? Talking to someone in the car? To himself? Singing along to the radio?

If lawmakers follow the advice of a federal board, police officers will have to start figuring that out—somehow.

The National Transportation Safety Board said this week that drivers should not only be barred from using hand-held cellphones, as they are in several states, but also from using hands-free devices. No more "Sorry, I'm stuck in traffic" calls, or virtually any other cellphone chatter behind the wheel.

Though no state has yet implemented such restrictive rules, the NTSB's recommendations carry weight that could place

such language into future laws, or motivate the federal government to cut funding to states that don't follow suit.

Many of the men and women patrolling the nation's streets and highways wonder how they would sort the criminally chatty from the legally chatty.

"It would be almost impossible to determine if someone was talking on a phone or exercising their vocal cords," said Capt. Donald Melanson of the West Hartford, Conn., police department, which took part in a national pilot program aimed at cracking down on drivers' cellphone use. "That would be much more difficult to enforce, almost to the point where it would be impossible."

Officer Tom Nichols of the Port St. Lucie, Fla., police said a

law written like the NTSB suggests would be difficult to enforce because so many variables would be at play.

"If you identify someone who has a hands-free set hooked up to their ear that doesn't mean they are talking on the phone," he said. "They could be talking to a passenger. They could be talking to a child in the back. They could be singing."

Police could end up turning to technology for help. They might even end up with the cellphone equivalent of a radar speed gun.

Fred Mannering, a Purdue University civil engineering professor who is associate director of the Center for Road Safety, said that since all cellphones emit signals, a simple Bluetooth detection device could spot them.



AP

Speaker of the House John Boehner, R-Ohio, departs after speaking at a news conference after House passage of legislation to extend Social Security payroll tax cuts, at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2011.

Police investigating Hawaii theft of baby's ashes

HONOLULU (AP)—A ceramic urn holding an infant's ashes was among the items stolen during a quick burglary of a Hawaii home, and the owner hopes it will be returned.

Leimomi Kahele left her home in Waialua, on Oahu's North Shore, for about 25 minutes Wednesday and returned to find it ransacked.

"Every single cabinet in my house was open," she said Thursday. "Every single dresser drawer was open with everything on the ground."

While walking through her home with officers, she noticed an empty spot on her bedroom dresser. "That's when I looked at my son's picture, and I realized the urn was gone," Kahele said. "I fell to my knees crying that they took my son's ashes."

Horace Keliioholokai Kahele III was born 15 weeks prema-

ture on Aug. 15, 2004. He lived for five days.

"On top of the urn was his rosary he wore when we took him off life support," Kahele said. "That's gone, too."

She had returned from a trip to the pharmacy when she noticed the baby gate on her porch was open and some jalousies were removed from a window. "I got back into the car and called police because I didn't know if anybody was still in the house," she said. The Kaheles moved into the house in May.

She was still taking inventory Thursday but said other missing items included a portable DVD player, clothes, \$600 of saved rent money in a safe and the lone present under the Christmas tree. Also gone was her 4-year-old daughter's princess pillowcase, which

Kahele suspects was used to haul the stolen items.

A Honolulu police spokeswoman said Thursday a report was filed and an investigation was ongoing. Officers who responded noted Kahele was extremely distraught over the missing urn, said police spokeswoman Caroline Sluyter.

The 25-year-old stay-at-home mom wants the urn returned, no questions asked. With her husband, mother, two aunts, a cousin and a friend, Kahele spent Thursday afternoon scouring Waialua's back roads for signs of the discarded urn or its contents, which were in a plastic bag inside. The small, oval container was sealed shut with glue, she said.

Kahele said the urn's disappearance, first reported by KHON-TV, is forcing her to relive the loss of her son.

Asia

Bootleg liquor kills 143 people in eastern India

SANGRAPUR, India (AP)—Bootleg liquor containing toxic methanol killed 143 people and sickened dozens more who drank the cheap, illicit brew bought at small shops in eastern India, officials said Thursday. Police arrested 10 suspected bootleggers.

Emergency medical teams rushed to the village outside Kolkata, and thousands of relatives, many of them wailing in grief, gathered outside the packed hospital. Inside, dead bodies lay on the floor covered in quilts, while the ill waited on staircases to be treated. Groups of men sat in the halls with saline drips running into their arms.

Abdul Gayen cried inconsolably for his son, Safiulla, a laborer who drank some of the

liquor Monday night and then complained of lightheadedness. When Safiulla woke up the next morning, he fell and began frothing at the mouth, Gayen said. He died before his family could get him to the hospital.

"Safiulla was the lone bread earner in our family. I don't know what will happen to us now," he said.

Illegal liquor operations flourish in the slums of urban India and among the rural poor who can't afford the alcohol at state-sanctioned shops. The hooch, often mixed with cheap chemicals to increase potency and profit, causes illness and death sometimes—and occasionally mass carnage.

Many of the victims—day laborers, street hawkers, rickshaw drivers—had gathered along a

road near a railway station after work to drink the illicit booze they bought for 10 rupees (20 cents) a half liter, less than a third the price of legal alcohol, district magistrate Naraya Swarup Nigam said.

They later began vomiting, suffering piercing headaches and frothing at the mouth, he said.

Angry villagers later ransacked booze shops around the village of Sangrapur, about 30 kilometers (20 miles) south of Kolkata, the city formerly known as Calcutta.

Police arrested 10 people in connection with making and distributing the methanol-tainted booze and demolished 10 illicit liquor dens in the area, said Luxmi Narayan Meena, district superintendent of police.

Arman Seikh, 23, rushed his

brother-in-law to the hospital.

"He complained of burning chest and severe stomach pain last night," he told The Associated Press.

Police officials said the liquor was from an illegal distillery in the village of Mograhat that

supplies 70 shops in the area. Police are searching for the kingpin of the operation, who has fled, they said.

Drinking alcohol contains ethanol, whereas highly toxic methanol—a clear liquid that can be used as fuel, solvent or

antifreeze—can induce comas and cause blindness and is deadly in high doses.

Anwar Hassan Mullah brought six sickened people to a hospital, and all of them died, he told NDTV news channel. He blamed police for turning a blind eye to bootleggers who spike their alcohol to boost its kick.

"It's a very sad thing that this has happened," Mullah said. "Why don't the police stop this? I cannot understand. What connection do they have (to the bootleggers)?"

By Thursday evening, the death toll had skyrocketed to 143, said Surajit Kar Purkayastha, a top West Bengal police official. About 100 people were being treated in hospitals, he said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee ordered an inquiry into the deaths, called for a meeting of the state's major political parties to address the problem and promised a crackdown.

"I want to take strong action against those manufacturing and selling illegal liquor," she said, according to Press Trust of India. "But this is a social problem also, and this has to be dealt with socially also along with action."

Despite religious and cultural taboos against drinking among Indians, 5 percent—roughly 60 million people—are alcoholics. Two-thirds of the alcohol consumed in the country is illegal homemade hooch or undocumented liquor smuggled in, according to The Lancet medical journal.



Bodies of people who died after drinking toxic alcohol, brought for investigation from other hospitals lie in front of a mortuary in Diamond Harbour, near Kolkata, India, Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011. A tainted batch of bootleg liquor has killed scores and sent dozens more to the hospital in villages outside the eastern Indian city of Kolkata, officials said.

Beijing, Washington closely watch Taiwan polls

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan's two leading presidential candidates have much in common: both are products of prestigious foreign universities, both come from well-established families, and neither is particularly charismatic.

But that's where the similarities end. Incumbent Ma Ying-jeou wants Taiwan to move closer to China while contender Tsai Ing-wen refuses to accept China's claim over the democratic island.

As the final month of campaigning began Thursday, their neck-and-neck race will be closely watched by Beijing and Washington even though the Jan. 14 poll has so far revolved mostly around domestic economic issues.

"It's basically coming down to choosing the lesser of two evils," said Taipei teacher Stanley Ho, 47. He said he has yet to make up his mind, largely because he can't get too excited about either.

Chinese and American interest is keyed to the question of

whether Ma will be able to continue his signature China policy, which in the past 3 1/2 years has lowered tensions across the 100-mile- (160-kilometer-) wide Taiwan Strait to their lowest level since the Taiwan and the mainland split amid civil war in 1949.

Ma's main emphasis has been on tying Taiwan's high-tech economy ever closer to China's lucrative markets, mostly through a series of ambitious initiatives including a far-reaching tariff slashing agreement, and the launching of hundreds of weekly cross-strait flights.

This has delighted Beijing, which sees in Ma its best hope of promoting its long held policy of bringing Taiwan under its control, not least because of his declared willingness to consider entering into political talks if he is re-elected.

It has also pleased the United States, because it regards a continuation of good cross-strait ties as a key to regional peace and economic development.

In the current race, Beijing

clearly favors Ma, while the U.S. says it is neutral. However, some senior officials in the Obama administration appear to share Beijing's anti-Tsai bias, despite her repeated efforts to take a moderate stance on the China issue and distance herself from the robust support for formal Taiwanese independence that has characterized her Democratic Progressive Party in the past.

Recent opinion polls say the race is a virtual dead heat.

Ma, 61, who has a Harvard law degree, had a solid, if not altogether distinguished, record as justice minister and mayor of Taipei, and a somewhat remote personality that makes it difficult for him to connect with people outside his inner circle. His father was a mid-level official in the Nationalist Party that Ma now heads.

Tsai, 55, the scion of a wealthy family from southern Taiwan, was educated at Cornell University in New York state and the London School of Economics.

workers waved their shirts from an upper-floor balcony to call for help after smoke began to engulf the building. Others used cellphones and flashlights to summon help. Police sealed off the building and declined to comment. The fire appeared to be out by mid-evening, several hours after it started, but fire engines and ambulances still crowded the area.

Police defuse 6 homemade bombs in Bangkok

BANGKOK (AP)—Thai police say they have defused six homemade bombs found in Bangkok and arrested one suspect. Police say they found the bombs early Friday in three locations in eastern Bangkok after they followed the suspect before arresting him. Deputy Prime Minister Chalermsak Yubumrung said some of the bombs were similar to one found on a traffic island in front of the Government Lottery Office on Dec. 6. Police safely disposed of that bomb.

Thai activist gets 15 years for insulting monarchy

BANGKOK (AP)—An activist was sentenced Thursday to 15 years in prison for insulting Thailand's king in the third case in a month involving the strict law against defaming the monarchy that is increasingly being criticized as an infringement on free speech.

Darane Charnchoengsilpakul, nicknamed "Da Torpedo" for her aggressive speaking style, has been detained since July 2008 after speaking at a rally using impolite language that was recorded by police.

The Criminal Court found Daranee guilty of violating the lese majeste law, which provides for a jail term of three to 15 years for anyone who "defames, insults, or threatens the king, the queen, the heir-apparent, or the regent."

Darane, a journalist, became an activist after Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was deposed in a 2006 coup and delivered fiery speeches at rallies organized by Thaksin's "Red Shirt" supporters.

Darane said she would not appeal her sentence. "I have no

will to keep fighting and I will neither lodge an appeal nor seek a royal pardon," she said.

Criticism of the lese majeste law increased last month after a 61-year-old grandfather received a 20-year sentence for four text messages sent from his phone to a government official.

The sentence given Amphon Tangnoppakul was believed to be the heaviest ever received in a lese majeste case because of additional penalties issued under a related law, the 2007 Computer Crimes Act. He denied sending the messages and said he didn't even know how to use the SMS function on his telephone.

The plight of "Uncle SMS," as he became known, has drawn international attention as has the sentencing earlier this month of Thai-born American Joe Gordon to 2 1/2 years in prison for translating excerpts of a banned biography of the king and placing them online. Gordon was in Colorado when the alleged offense occurred and was arrested when he later visited Thailand.

A U.S. State Department spokeswoman, Darragh Paradiso, said the United States has utmost respect for the Thai monarchy, but is "troubled by recent prosecutions and court decisions that are not consistent with international standards of freedom of expression."

The office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, issued a statement of concern, saying "Such harsh criminal sanctions are neither necessary nor proportionate and violate the country's international human rights obligations."

Lese majeste prosecutions used to be rare in Thailand, and were mostly used for partisan political purposes as a means of smearing opponents.

But the number of high-profile cases has risen in recent years as nervousness about the eventual succession to 84-year-old King Bhumibol Adulyadej has increased, with the previously taboo subject of the monarchy's proper role starting to become a matter of public discussion.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Indonesia to investigate beheadings of farmers

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesia's president has ordered an investigation into the videotaped beheadings of two men—allegedly by security forces hired to protect a palm oil plantation. Farmers showed the gruesome clip to Parliament's human rights commission earlier this week. They alleged that security forces and other men hired by a palm oil company to protect disputed land in South Sumatra province have killed at least 30 farmers and villagers since 2009.

Hanoi office tower fire spreads smoke around city

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—An office tower being built by Vietnam's state power company caught fire Thursday, engulfing part of downtown Hanoi in black smoke. Official media said 30 workers were rescued, but it was not immediately clear whether others remained trapped inside. Several

World

US formally ends Iraq war with little fanfare

BAGHDAD (AP)—Nearly nine years after American troops stormed across the Iraq border in a blaze of shock and awe, U.S. officials quietly ended the bloody and bitterly divisive conflict here Thursday, but the debate over whether it was worth the cost in money and lives is yet unanswered.

While many of the speeches painted a picture of victory—for both the troops and the Iraqi people now set on a path for democracy—the gnawing questions remain: Will Iraqis be able to forge their new government amid the still stubborn sectarian clashes. And will Iraq be able to defend itself and remain independent in a region fraught with turmoil and still steeped in insurgent threats.

Stark reminders of the fragile and often violent nature of the situation in Iraq engulfed the 45-minute ceremony. It was tucked into fortified corner of the airport, ringed with concrete blast walls. And on the chairs—nearly empty of Afghans—were tags that listed not only the name of the VIP assigned to the seat, but the bunker they should move to in case of an attack.

The speeches touched on the success of the mission as well as its losses: Nearly 4,500 Americans and

100,000 Iraqis killed. Another 32,000 American and tens of thousands Iraqis were wounded. And \$800 billion from the U.S. Treasury.

On the other side of the ledger, an Iraq free from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein, inching forward toward democracy and vowing to be a good neighbor in the region.

“To be sure the cost was high—in blood and treasure of the United States and also the Iraqi people,” Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told the roughly 200 troops and others in attendance. “Those lives have not been lost in vain—they gave birth to an independent, free and sovereign Iraq.”

Gen. Lloyd Austin, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, said the Iraqi people now have an unprecedented opportunity to live in a relatively peaceful environment, but he also acknowledged it will be a challenging time. And he urged Iraqi leaders to make good choices based on what is best for their people.

“Violence and prosperity cannot co-exist,” said Austin, who eight years, eight months and 26 days ago gave the order for U.S. troops to storm across the border into Iraq. And on Thursday he gave the order to retire the flag of

U.S. Forces-Iraq.

The flag was then rolled up, covered by a camouflage colored sheath and will be brought back to the U.S.

Speaking to the troops in the audience, Panetta lauded their service and their bravery, adding, “You will leave with great pride—lasting pride—secure in knowing that your sacrifice has helped the Iraqi people to begin a new chapter in history.”

Many Iraqis, however, are uncertain of how that chapter will unfold. Their relief at the end of Saddam, who was hanged on the last day of 2006, was tempered by a long and vicious war that was launched to find non-existent weapons of mass destruction and nearly plunged the nation into full-scale sectarian civil war.

“With this withdrawal, the Americans are leaving behind a destroyed country,” said Mariam Khazim, a Shiite whose father was killed when a mortar shell struck his home in Sadr City. “The Americans did not leave modern schools or big factories behind them. Instead, they left thousands of widows and orphans. The Americans did not leave a free people and country behind them, in fact they left a ruined country and a divided nation.”

Some Iraqis celebrated the exit of what they called American occupiers, neither invited nor welcome in a proud country.

“The American ceremony represents the failure of the U.S. occupation of Iraq due to the great resistance of the Iraqi people,” said lawmaker Amir al-Kinani, a member of the political coalition loyal to anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

Others said that while grateful for U.S. help ousting Saddam, the war went on too long. A majority of Americans would agree, according to opinion polls.

The low-key nature of the ceremony stood in sharp contrast to the high octane start of the war, which began before dawn on March 20, 2003, with an airstrike in southern Baghdad where Saddam was believed to be hiding. U.S. and allied ground forces then stormed across the featureless Kuwaiti desert, accompanied by reporters, photographers and television crews embedded with the troops.

The final few thousand U.S. troops will leave Iraq in orderly caravans and tightly scheduled flights.

Austin led the massive logistical challenge of shuttering hundreds of

bases and combat outposts, and methodically moving more than 50,000 U.S. troops and their equipment out of Iraq over the last year—while still conducting training, security assistance and counterterrorism battles.

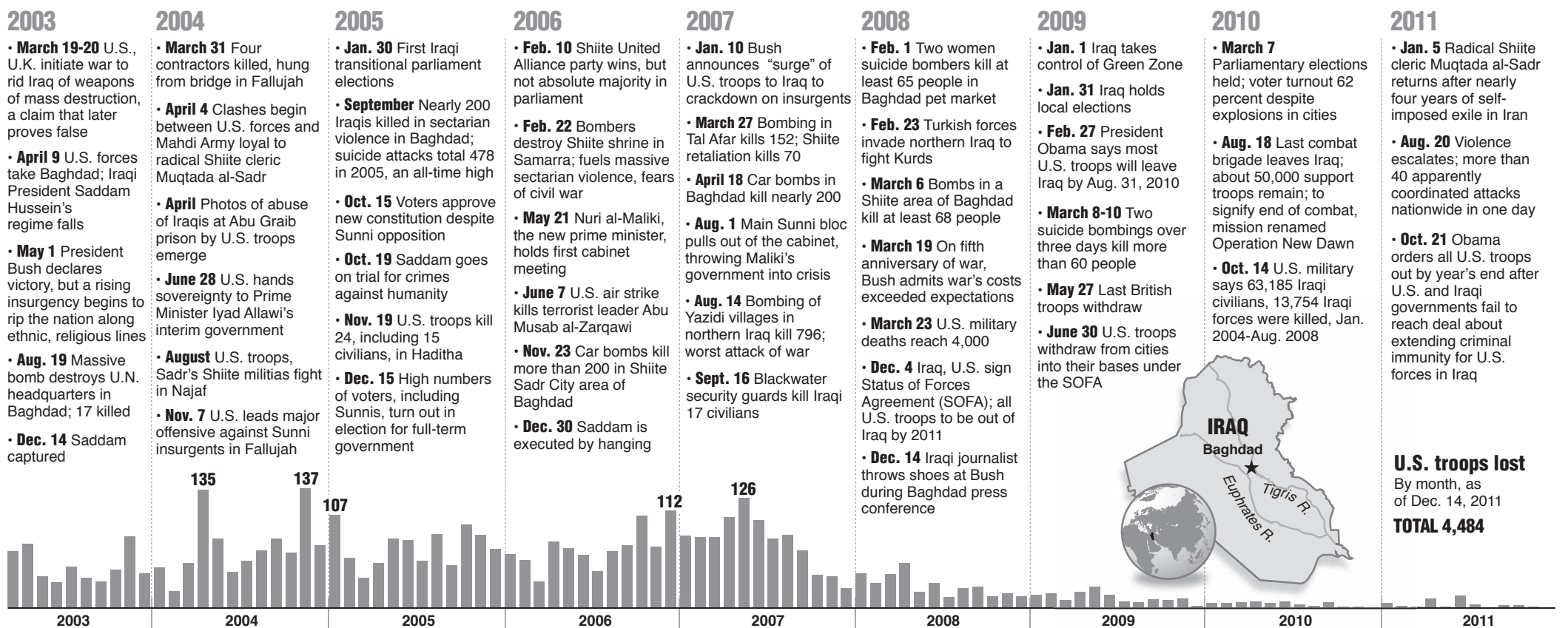
The war “tested our military’s strength and our ability to adapt and evolve,” he said, noting the development of the new counterinsurgency doctrine.

As of Thursday, there were two U.S. bases and less than 4,000 U.S. troops in Iraq—a dramatic drop from the roughly 500 military installations and as many as 170,000 troops during the surge ordered by President George W. Bush in 2007, when violence and raging sectarianism gripped the country. All U.S. troops are slated to be out of Iraq by the end of the year, but officials are likely to meet that goal a bit before then.

The total U.S. departure is a bit earlier than initially planned, and military leaders worry that it is a bit premature for the still maturing Iraqi security forces, who face continuing struggles to develop the logistics, air operations, surveillance and intelligence-sharing capabilities they will need in what has long been a difficult region.

Nearly nine years in Iraq

In March 2003, the U.S. bombarded Baghdad, beginning an unpopular war that gave rise to an insurgency that continues to claim Iraqi lives. In October, President Barack Obama ordered the withdrawal of all U.S. troops, putting an end to the war by Dec. 31.



Source: BBC, Reuters, AP, Council on Foreign Relations, McClatchy Washington Bureau

Graphic: Pat Carr, Judy Treible

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WORLD BRIEFS

Carlos the Jackal sentenced to life, again

PARIS (AP)—Carlos the Jackal, the flamboyant Venezuelan who symbolized Cold War terrorism, was sentenced to life in prison—again—in a Paris trial that ended late Thursday with him rallying for revolution and weeping for Moammar Gadhafi. Carlos, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, hasn't seen freedom since French agents spirited him out of Sudan in a sack in 1994. He's already

serving a life sentence in a French prison for a triple murder in 1975, the worst punishment meted out in a country that does not have the death penalty. Once one of world's most-wanted men, the former gun-for-hire and self-proclaimed revolutionary was escorted out of his cell and back to court last month to face charges that he instigated four bombings in France in 1982 and 1983 that killed 11 people and injured more than 140

others. Just before midnight Thursday, the court found Ramirez guilty in all four attacks, and sentenced him to life in prison with no possibility of parole for 18 years.

Italian appeals court says why it cleared Knox

MILAN, Italy (AP)—No murder weapon. Faulty DNA. No motive. Even the time of death was wrong by nearly an hour. The Italian appeals court that

cleared Amanda Knox in the killing of her roommate explained its ruling on Thursday: The evidence just didn't hold up. In a 143-page document that criticized nearly every stage of the investigation that led to the conviction of Knox and her Italian boyfriend, Raffaele Sollecito, the appeals court said the lower court didn't even prove they were in the house when Knox's British roommate, Meredith Kercher, was killed. Kercher was found slain in a

pool of blood in the house she shared with Knox in the Italian city of Perugia.

Russian fishing ship listing badly near Antarctica

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—A Russian fishing vessel with 32 crew members was in trouble and taking on water near Antarctica on Friday, with heavy sea ice hampering rescue efforts. The vessel Sparta was listing at 13

degrees next to the Antarctic ice shelf in the Ross Sea, according to Maritime New Zealand. The agency said that the crew was safe and was throwing cargo overboard to lighten the ship, and that some of the crew had boarded lifeboats as a precautionary measure. The crew also was pumping water out of the vessel, the agency said in a statement. The crew is made up of 15 Russians, 16 Indonesians and one Ukrainian, the agency said.

Young Style

NEW YORK (AP)—Make room in the toy box for the iPad.

Crayola allows tots to doodle on the iPad using its iMarker just as they would a crayon on a coloring book. Tweens are able to belt out their favorite Miley Cyrus and Selena Gomez tunes on a Disney microphone that turns the tablet into a karaoke machine. And technology accessories company Griffin enables teens to fly its toy helicopter by using the iPhone as a remote control.

This holiday season, toy makers have turned Apple Inc.'s pricey tablet and smartphone into playthings for kids. They figure in this weak economy, parents will be willing to splurge on toys for their children that utilize devices they already have—or want—themselves.

Tiffany Fessler of Gainesville, Georgia, certainly was willing to do that even though when she initially bought her \$829 iPad she never imagined she'd be sharing it with her 20-month-old son. But whenever she sat down to check emails on the iPad, he'd climb into her lap wanting to use it.

So, Fessler decided to get him the \$29.99 Crayola iMarker, which transforms the iPad into a digital coloring book using a Crayola's free ColorStudio HD application that parents can download. Kids can draw and color using the iMarker, which has a soft tip so it doesn't scratch the tablet's glass screen.

"When you have a screaming toddler in a restaurant or any public area, you want to have something to calm him down with," says Fessler, 39. "This is just another way to keep him entertained."

That the iPad and iPhone have infiltrated the \$22 billion toy market this season is no surprise.

Smartphones and tablets—particularly Apple products—are more popular than ever with people of all ages. This year, Apple

is expected to double the number of iPhones sold to 90.6 million worldwide, according to research firm Gartner, while the number of iPads sold is

expected to triple to 46.7 million.

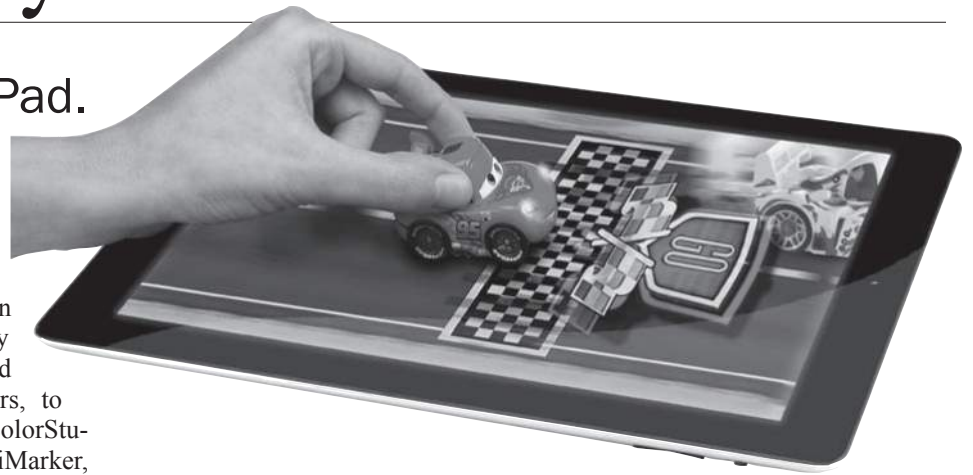
And Apple products have a certain "cool factor" with kids that toy companies, which can make up to half of their revenue during the holidays, are hoping to tap into. In fact, the iPad and iPhone are among the most coveted electronics this holiday season among kids. About 44 percent of 6- to 12-year-olds want the iPad this year, according to a survey by research firm Nielsen. The iPod touch came in the No. 2 spot with 30 percent, followed by the iPhone at 27 percent.

Not to mention, anyone who's a parent knows all too well that babies and

says Chris Baynes, a toy analyst. "It's a way to get the kid to be quiet."

With that in mind, Crayola teamed up with Nashville, Tennessee-based Griffin Technology, which is mostly known for selling iPhone and iPad cases and car chargers, to make the iMarker and the ColorStudio HD app for kids. The iMarker, which is like a stylus that resembles a Crayola marker, is targeted at children ages three and up.

"Regardless of who they buy it for, once it is in the household, we know



This undated product photo provided by Disney, shows the Disney AppMates. AppMates, is a toy car based on the characters from the company's "Car's 2" animated movie. One car sells for \$12.99 while a two-pack goes for \$19.99. The free app lets kids drive around on different courses by moving the car across the iPad screen.

iPads become child's play

By JOSEPH PISANI
AP Business Writer

older kids alike love to fiddle with or drool all over mommy's iPad. Nearly 40 percent of 2-to 4-year-olds have used a smartphone, iPad or video iPod, according to a survey by nonprofit group Common Sense Media. That number rises to 52 percent for 5- to 8-year olds. And even 10 percent of infants have used one of the devices before their first birthday.

"It's mostly something for kids to use in the car or at the doctor's office,"

that kids use it," says Vicky Lozano, vice president of marketing at Crayola, which makes the iMarker.

Other toy makers also have gotten into the game:

— Griffin's \$49.99 remote-controlled toy helicopter is aimed at teens over 14. Called the "HELO TC," it flies using a device that plugs into an iPhone, iPad or iPod. A free app turns the touchscreen of the devices into a cockpit that controls the helicopter.

— Mattel Inc.'s Fisher-Price unit is selling "The Laugh and Learn Apptivity Case" aimed at babies for \$15. The case locks the iPhone into a colorful, easy to grab case that looks like a big round rattle. The case stops babies from making unwanted calls and protects the iPhone from something else: drool. Parents can open up three free apps that play music, read words aloud and count numbers. The company plans to release an iPad version of the case this spring.

— Disney has three offerings. The "Disney Spotlight" microphone, which



This product photo provided by Spin Master Ltd, shows the Appblaster. The \$19.99 AppBlaster, a plastic gun for kids over 8 years old. After slipping an iPhone or iPad touch on top of the AppBlaster, kids can shoot at aliens that pop up on the screen.

is \$69.99 or \$99.99 for a wireless version, plugs into the iPad and allows kids to sing along to Disney songs from shows such as "Hannah Mon-

tana"—or to their own music—and record their own music video. Disney's \$79.99 AppClix digital camera enables kids to upload their pictures to an iPad and a free app allows them add Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck into the photos. And Disney teamed up with Canadian toy maker Spin Master to create "Appmates," a toy car based on the characters from the company's "Car's 2" animated movie. One car sells for \$12.99 while a two-pack goes for \$19.99. Using a free app, kids can "drive" on different courses by moving the car across the iPad screen.

— Spin Master, which makes toys such as Air Hogs and Bakugan, started a new line this year of toys for the iPad and iPhone called "AppFinity." Its first toy in the line is the \$19.99 AppBlaster, a plastic gun for kids over age eight. After slipping an iPhone or iPad touch on top of the AppBlaster, kids can shoot at aliens that pop up on the screen.

Analysts say these toys are just the beginning of a new niche for toy makers. Indeed, most of the companies say they plan to roll out more products for smartphones and tablets—including some that use Google Inc.'s Android software—next year.

"I think it's going to be a growing segment," says Jim Silver, editor-in-chief at toy review website TimeToPlaymag.com. "Next year, there will be even more (products) than you can possibly imagine."

Winter queen symbolizes season's solstice

By KATHY ANTONIOTTI
AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

In the Northern Hemisphere, the first day of winter, called the winter solstice, occurs when the sun appears at its lowest point in the sky, making it the shortest day and longest night of the year.

This year, the winter solstice will occur at 5:30 a.m. Dec. 22.

Early winter solstice celebrations, which are believed to have started during Neolithic times about 10,000 B.C., were marked by people with trepidation. Ancient people knew if they had not adequately prepared for the event during the nine months before the solstice, they would very likely face starvation and not survive the winter.

Until they saw the days grow longer, people had no science to under-

stand that the sun would once again shine brightly on their crops during the growing season. In temperate climates, the festival would be the last one celebrated before deep winter, a time of famine, set in.

Today, many people note the day with relief that the cycle of dark days begins to reverse and the sun begins to stay above the horizon, giving us a bit more daylight each day. Using science, today we also know that the event occurs because the Earth sits at a 23.5-degree tilt as it revolves around the sun each year. Those of us living in the Northern Hemisphere receive less direct sunlight during the winter.

I made a winter fairy queen to celebrate the winter solstice with directions I found at <http://twigandtoadstool.blogspot.com/2010/11/queen-winter.html>. You can go there



Make a winter fairy queen to celebrate the winter solstice.

to see step-by-step photos of the project. Younger children will need help from an adult to do this craft.

Supplies you will need:

- Wooden doll pin and stand.
- 1 white Chenille stem.
- Cotton or purchased doll hair.
- White felt.
- White tulle.
- 1 white silk flower.
- 1 acorn top.
- 1 white feather.
- Low temperature glue gun.

Wrap the pipe cleaner around the body (twisting it once in the back to hold better) just below the head and trim to arm length.

Cut a 6-inch-by-5-inch rectangle from white felt. Fold in half, matching the two shorter sides together.

Cut a small hole at the fold in the center to slip over the top of the clothespin. Cut two slits in the front and back from the bottom edge to about two inches from the fold. Make it wide enough to wrap around the pin and glue front to back.

Make two diagonal cuts from the bottom outside corners up to the top of the slits for sleeves. Glue the edges together.

Draw a circle five inches in circumference for a skirt and cut out. Cut a hole in the center and slip up over the clothespin.

Bunch the tulle around the pin under the skirt and glue in place.

Cut four petals from a silk flower and glue to the back of the clothespin.

Glue some white cotton to the top of the pin for hair and glue the acorn top on top.

Wrap a feather around the pin at the waist and secure in back with glue.

Place the pin inside a stand. Glue in place to hold.

If you have a craft idea or question, contact Kathy Antonioti, Akron Beacon Journal, P.O. Box 640, Akron, OH 44309-0640; 330-996-3565; or kantonioti@thebeaconjournal.com.

Puzzle Card



Place five small pieces of paper close together on the back of someone's hand.

Now bet them that they can't blow them away, one by one. They will almost always blow two or more away at a time.

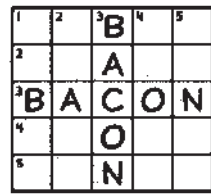
Solution: Place the papers on the back of your hand and hold down four of them with the fingers of your other hand. Blow the first paper away, left a finger and blow the next away, and continue in this manner until all are gone.

TAKE ONE HUNDRED AND ONE, AND TO IT AFFIX THE HALF OF A DOZEN, OR IF YOU PLEASE SIX. ADD FIFTY TO THIS, AND THEN YOU WILL SEE WHAT EVERY GOOD BOY TO OTHERS SHOULD BE.



HOLD THE LETTUCE AND TOMATO! Can you find the four five-letter words for the Word Square that match the definitions below? All words must read the same both across and down.

1. He runs a monastery.
2. A destructive fire.
3. Part of a BLT (given).
4. Found high above Earth.
5. A true principle.

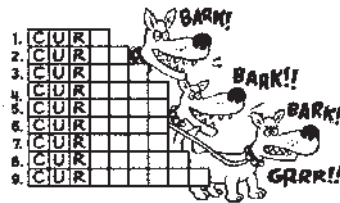


Answers: 1. Abbot, 2. Blaze, 3. Bacon, 4. Ozon, 5. Tenet.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

A PACK OF "CURS"!



Don't "bark" up the wrong tree looking for these words. The grid to the left has room for nine words, and they all contain the word "cur." We also give you plenty of hints to help you fill in the missing letters.

1. Rudely, brief in speech.
2. To swear at.
3. Specific time to be home by.
4. A museum director.
5. To cut short; abbreviate.
6. Spoiled milk.
7. A hasty performance.
8. A fancy flourish made with a pen.
9. Part of a paved road.

Answers: 1. Curt, 2. Curse, 3. Curfew, 4. Curator, 5. Curtail, 6. Curled, 7. Curiosity, 8. Curlicue, 9. Curbstone.

Strange BUT TRUE

by Samantha Weaver

■ It was American inventor and businessman Thomas Alva Edison who made the following sage observation: "Opportunity is missed by most people because it comes dressed in overalls and looks like work."

■ If you're planning a trip to Peru to ring in the new year, you might want to bring along some yellow underwear. In that country it's considered lucky to wear it on the first day of the new year.

■ Another story to add to the file on clueless criminals: In 2010, two men in Portland, Ore., went to a supermarket and started removing price tags from items and filling their backpacks with the loot. However, they didn't even make it out of the store with their ill-gotten gains. It seems that the would-be crooks decided to do their shoplifting during a "Shop With a Cop" promotion, and there were 60 police officers already in the store—in uniform.

■ You may be surprised to learn that the Statue of Liberty is not located in New York. While it is on Liberty Island in New York Harbor, it's technically within the territorial waters of Jersey City, N.J.

■ If you're going to be traveling to California anytime soon, you might want to keep this in mind: In that state, shooting game from a moving vehicle is illegal—unless the animal you're aiming for is a whale.

■ A baseball will travel farther on a hot day than on a cold one.

■ The oldest bakery yet uncovered was found by archaeologists digging in the Egyptian city of Giza in 2002. They say that the baking trays, bread molds and ovens there date back to 2500 B.C., right around the time the pyramids were being built.

Thought for the Day: "Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities. Truth isn't."—Mark Twain

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MAGIC MAZE • — STEEL

I I D G E L B Y W U R P T N K I
G D A S T A I N L E S S O F B
Z D E N E D R A H X V S Q O O
M K I G I L E U E C A Y W S L
U S Q L P E (B E T H L E I I E M)
N L O J H K L I P C F E S V A
C S A Y S C X L C S U I V R R
U S Q A P I N M E U H R K E F
J H M F O N A M F C R G T N L
E A C B Z Y N O B R A C I S O
D X V U T R Q P O M L K I H W

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Bethlehem	Damask	Man of	Structural
Carbon	Danielle	Nerves of	Tool
Chisel	Hardened	Nickel	Wolfarm
Crucible	High-speed	Solid	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★★

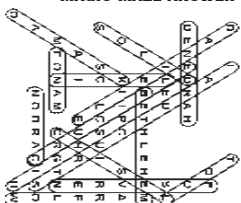
★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	+		÷		3
×		-		×	
	-		×		8
+		×		÷	
	×		+		11
11		15		4	

1 2 3 4 5 5 6 7 8

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MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



GO FIGURE ANSWER

	4	15		11
4	6	5	×	1
÷		×		+
8	8	×	4	-
×		-		×
3	3	÷	7	+
				2

Bride wants to use dog in wedding

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My step-daughter Susan is getting married on the day after Christmas, in the Bahamas. A lot of her relatives, including myself, are rather miffed about the date and location. But even more outrageous are her plans for the wedding itself. She's decided that her yellow Lab, "Briny," will serve as the ring bearer! I'm not sure how she plans to pull this off, but I think it's really inappropriate. How can I tell her this without upsetting her?—Joyce L., Deerfield Beach, Fla.



DEAR JOYCE: I don't think there's a way to say what's on your mind without upsetting her, because you're unhappy with the wedding plans overall. Personally, I think it sounds really fun that Briny has such an important place in the wedding.

Susan does need to make sure that Briny can make the trip over to the Bahamas. The website www.bahamas.com has details on getting a pet import permit, but the most important detail is that Briny must have up-to-date shots and Susan must bring the written record of those immunizations with her.

So, the most you can and should do is double-check with Susan that she has

taken care of these requirements for Briny and that she's staying in accommodations that allow pets.

This close to the wedding, it's probably best not to go into any other details. If you've accepted the invitation and finalized your travel plans, go to the wedding, enjoy a fruity beverage (preferably with an umbrella), and be happy.

Send your question or tip to ask@pawscorner.com, or write to Paw's Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. For more pet care-related advice and information, visit www.pawscorner.com.

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Meringue mushrooms are whimsical treat

Magical meringue mushrooms are a trompe l'oeil (trick of the eye), as the French say, and, in fact, France is where this whimsical holiday recipe originates. They look like mushrooms, but taste like dessert! With family-friendly steps, it's a must for giving and eating through the New Year.

Meringue Mushrooms

3 egg whites (1/2 cup) at room temperature
1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup chocolate chips
Cocoa powder for dusting



1. Preheat oven to 225 F. In a large bowl, beat the egg whites until frothy and foamy with an electric mixer set at low speed. Add the cream of tartar. Increase speed until soft peaks form. Start adding the sugar slowly, a tablespoon at a time. Let your kids watch as the mixture changes, and glossy stiff peaks form. Beat an additional 5 minutes after sugar is added.

2. Spoon the thick mixture into a large plastic zipper-style bag and push toward one corner to form a pastry bag. Cut off the very tip of that corner so the meringue can be squeezed out of the bag (or use a pastry bag and a 5/8-inch tip).

Let your child try it out by dotting four small beads of meringue at the corners of the cookie sheet. Set a sheet of parchment paper over the top. The beads will provide a bond to hold the paper in place.

3. Make the mushroom caps by holding the bag over the parchment paper and push until a one-inch mound of meringue forms. Place 1/2 inch apart. Once you have made approximately 35-40 caps,

Donna's Day Creative family fun

by Donna Erickson

let your child dip the tip of his finger in a small bowl of water and gently round any peaks to make a smooth surface. Lightly strain cocoa powder across the tops.

Shape mushroom stems about 3/4 to 1-inch high on another parchment paper covered cookie sheet by pulling the bag up as you press meringue out. Tap down peaks with wet fingers. These stems will

be attached to the caps with melted chocolate after baking.

4. Place the two cookie sheets in the oven for 1 hour or until meringues can be lifted easily. Turn off the heat and leave in the oven with the door propped open for an hour or more. The extra time allows the meringue caps and stems to dry.

5. To construct mushrooms, melt the chocolate chips in a microwave-safe dish. Use a small spoon to spread chocolate on the underside of a cap. Attach a stem. Allow the chocolate "glue" to harden. Arrange in a festive basket and share with friends at a holiday party.

Donna Erickson's award-winning series "Donna's Day" is airing on public television nationwide. To find more of her creative family recipes and activities, visit www.donnasday.com and link to the NEW Donna's Day Facebook fan page. Her latest book is "Donna Erickson's Fabulous Funstuff for Families."

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Good Housekeeping

Taking rock art to the wild side

By **KIM PALMER**
STAR TRIBUNE (MINNEAPOLIS)

MINNEAPOLIS—Stone artist Shane Schaaf doesn't take on avant-garde artsy projects only. His company, Earthscape Stoneworks, designs and installs some fairly traditional patios, fireplaces and retaining walls.

But he's become a go-to guy for those who want something unique for their landscape: a mosaic wall, dog caves, courtyards studded with stained glass or semiprecious gems, gravity-defying stone columns that appear to bend like overcooked spaghetti.

His slogan is "Teaching old stones new tricks."

"My goal is to create a sense of joy and wonder for people within their home and landscape," he said. "Everyone can have a wonder-filled space."

Stone isn't his only medium. He also works with metal and "woodgraph," a term he coined to describe the art of stacking reclaimed wood. "But I enjoy the freedom that stone offers," he said. "Stone is a very versatile material.

Anything you want to build with stone, you pretty much can."

Many of his designs look fanciful but they're always designed to address a client's practical need. "Someone needs something for a reason," he said. "It can't just be cool. Otherwise, I'd just build in the studio."

In one client's front yard, for example, Schaaf designed an elaborate, walled courtyard with a water feature and amethyst geode sensor lights, because the client was seeking "a private, intimate space in a very suburban cul-de-sac," he said.

"The Cocoon"—arches of curved metal rebar that run along one side of the house—was de-

signed to create a zone of privacy between the house and the one next door.

There wasn't room for a garden in the narrow corridor, Schaaf said, but eventually, ivy will cover the rebar and form a leafy green tunnel.

"The people and the property drive the ideas," he said. "I wouldn't come up with any of these ideas if it wasn't for them. The truth is, anytime I build something cool it's not because I had a grand idea but my relationship with the client takes it to the next level."

Schaaf, a native of Willmar, Minn., became interested in outdoor fireplaces while working at a resort in Arizona. "Every restaurant and house had one, but I had hardly seen them here. I thought, 'If people in the middle of the desert enjoy outdoor fireplaces, so should Minnesota.'"

He started studying Old World masonry techniques, working both with mortar and the dry-stack method of fitting stones together without mortar. Often he combines the two methods, such as dry-stack stonework embedded in mortared stonework "to give textural contrast," he said. "I like the combination of organic and formal, natural and controlled."

Some of his clients' landscapes are long-term works-in-progress, and that's the way he likes it. "People rarely think of doing things in phases, but the truth is, you can't do everything you want all at once. People try to get as much done as they can, within their budget, versus trying to be creative and expressive. Stone is something you'll have a long time. It's going to be there, longer than you."

So what's in his own yard? "Nothing like this!" Schaaf said with a laugh. "People in the neighborhood walk by and say how nice it looks, but the funny thing is, my wife's done most of the landscaping."

ing those debris from the yard. Garden tools will come down from the highest shelf of the garage, ready to be put to use in a few weeks, but the snow shovel will stay near the side door just in case.

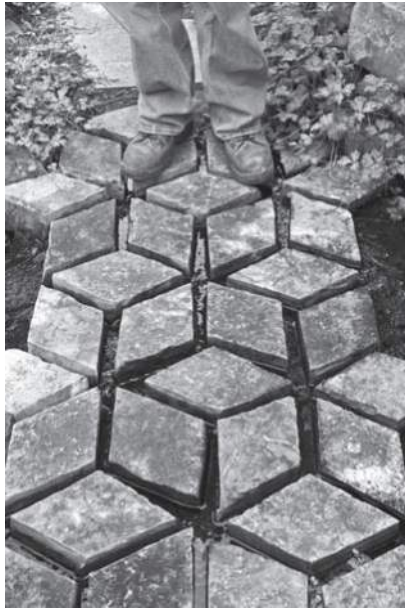
April is still iffy for some garden plants, but once there's no danger of a hard frost, soil can be turned over and, in the meantime, the lawn can be treated and prepared for the growing season. It's also time to start repairing any exterior damage to the roof, eaves, gutters and downspouts, as well as remove and repair storm windows and put up screens in their place.

That's the first four months of the year: gradually getting busier, hopefully with no major storms or unplanned home repairs like busted furnaces or hot water heaters. May will bring much warmer temperatures and more maintenance work, but that's a thought for another quiet day.

HOME TIP: Keep a home maintenance calendar in your workshop with important projects highlighted so that you can plan for them well in advance.

home tip Send your questions or tips to ask@thisisahammer.com, or write *This Is a Hammer*, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

signed to create a zone of privacy between the house and the one next door.



MCT

A fountain flows through a stone pathway at a home in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, where stone artist Shane Schaaf has been working on various stone projects for the past five years.



A stone arch and pathway to the rear yard of a home in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, where stone artist Shane Schaaf has been working on various stone projects the last five years.

MCT

A stone wall and patio is part of a home in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, where stone artist Shane Schaaf has been working on various stone projects the last five years.

MCT

Home maintenance in the new year

By **SAMANTHA MAZZOTTA**
KING FEATURES SYND., INC.



Ready for the new year? Me neither. It's too soon after what's been a really long and frenetic holiday season, starting with a pre-Halloween snowstorm that had me and my neighbors juggling snow shovels and carved pumpkins, and then moving straight into Thanksgiving and Christmas almost too fast to blink. I'm looking forward to catching my breath this week, however, and putting together my home maintenance plans for next year.

January will be pretty quiet, except for the monthly furnace filter change and making sure ice dams and snow aren't building up on the roof and gutters. Melting or removing them quickly will prevent much more expensive repairs. February is more of the same, but I'm also laying out what I'll be planting in the deck garden this year. If there's no snow on the ground, I'll be scattering grass seed over bare or thin patches in the lawn and protecting it from the birds with a light layer of straw.

In March I'll be inspecting the exterior and yard for damage from fallen limbs or wind-blown debris, and if the snow has melted, clear-

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



Verna Masga Reyes

FONDLY KNOWN AS "VERN"
March 5, 1974 – December 10, 2011

of Yona, Guam formerly of Kagman III, Saipan was called home by our heavenly Father at the age of 37.

In her new life, Verna will be met at the gates of heaven by her mother, †**Francisca Masga Reyes**, Grandparents: †**Nicolas B.** & †**Ignacia A. Reyes**; †**Jose H.** & †**Maria A. Masga**.

Verna's love and memories will always be cherished in the hearts of her:
Domestic Partner: John B. Lizama
Children: Francea R. Lizama; Derick R. Lizama; John R. Lizama; & Jonah R. Lizama
Father/Stepmother: Jose Agulto Reyes & Soledad (Darling) C. Duenas
Brothers/Sisters & Spouses: Dennis & Yvonne M. Reyes – Kyana, Jake, Joseph, Alexis & JDen; Nick & Mary S. Reyes – Amber, Chelses & Nico; Doreen & John Sablan – John, Ashley, Maegan, Josh & Colvin; Jovene & Patrick Ogo – Kishia, Keoni & Kianny; Germaine & Peter Crisostimo – Korey & Myah; Maynard & Nicole Reyes – Vincent & Aiden; Jolene Duenas Jesse & Gina DI. Cruz – Jenna; Anthony & Redie DI. Cruz – Anthony, Jr., Carlo & Chase

Numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews & friends will also miss her.

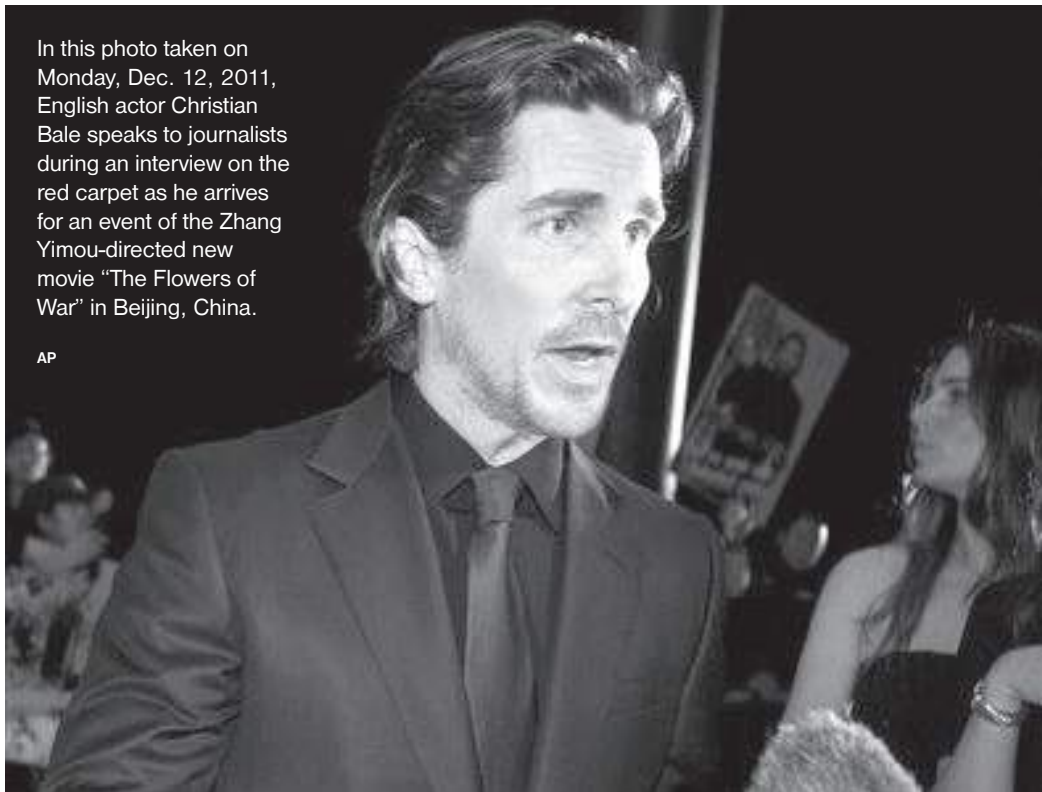
Last respect for Verna will be held on Monday, December 19, 2011 where her remains will be escorted from Nuestra Señora dela Paz Memorial Chapel, Cabrera Center to Mt. Carmel Cathedral for public viewing from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Mass for a Christian burial will be offered at 11:00 a.m. Interment will follow at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery where we will bid her farewell and a peaceful rest.

Life & Style

'Batman' star Bale tries to visit China activist

In this photo taken on Monday, Dec. 12, 2011, English actor Christian Bale speaks to journalists during an interview on the red carpet as he arrives for an event of the Zhang Yimou-directed new movie "The Flowers of War" in Beijing, China.

AP



BEIJING (AP)—"Batman" star Christian Bale, in the midst of promoting a film he made in China that some critics have called propaganda, was stopped trying to visit a blind activist living under house arrest—with a CNN crew in tow.

CNN posted footage of a scuffle between Bale and the activist's guards on its website Friday.

The run-in and publicity is likely to cause discomfort in China's government-backed film industry, which hopes Bale's movie "The Flowers of War" will be a creative success at home and abroad. It also raises questions about whether it was prudent to bring the star to see an activist guarded by thugs who have turned away dozens of reporters and fellow activists trying to see him in the past.

Bale was due to leave China

on Friday and his representatives could not immediately be reached for comment. A CNN spokesman did not immediately respond to questions about the story, but said a statement would be forthcoming.

Bale, who won a best supporting actor Oscar for last year's "The Fighter," traveled Thursday with a crew from CNN to the village in eastern China where blind lawyer Chen Guangcheng lives with his family in complete isolation.

They were stopped at the entrance to Dongshigu village in Shandong province by unidentified men.

The footage shows Bale asking to see Chen, with a CNN producer providing interpretation, but being ordered by one of the guards to leave. He then asked why he was unable to pass through. The guards responded

by trying to grab or punch a small video camera Bale was carrying.

"What I really wanted to do was to meet the man, shake his hand and say what an inspiration he is," Bale was quoted as saying by CNN.

Journalists and scores of Chinese human rights activists have sought to visit Chen in the past, all unsuccessfully. Chen's case has also been raised publicly by U.S. congressmen and diplomats, including Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, all to no response from China.

CNN said Bale first learned of Chen from news reports when he was in China filming "The Flowers of War," China's official submission for best foreign language film Oscar. It said he "reached out to CNN and invited us to join him on his journey to visit Chen."

Captain America co-creator Joe Simon dies in NYC

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Joe Simon, who along with Jack Kirby co-created Captain America and was one of the comic book industry's most revered writers, artists and editors, has died at age 98.

Simon's family relayed word of his death Thursday, posting a short statement on Facebook and telling The Associated Press through a spokesman that Simon died Wednesday night in New York City after a brief illness.

"Joe was one of a kind," said Steve Saffel, of Titan Books, a Simon friend who worked with him on his recent autobiography, "Joe Simon, My Life In Comics."

Saffel said that Simon, born in Rochester, N.Y., in 1913, "lived life on his terms and created incredible things in the process. It was a privilege to know him and to call him my friend." Among Simon's creations was a partnership with Kirby, a comic book artist and illustrator. The duo worked hand-in-glove for years and from their fertile imaginations sprang a trove of characters, heroes, villains and misfits for several comic book companies in their Golden Age of the 1940s, including Timely, the forerunner of today's Marvel Comics; National Periodicals, the forerunner of DC; and Fawcett, among others.

The characters the two created included the Newsboy Legion, the Boy Commandos and others, like Blue Bolt.

"Blue Bolt was the first strip Jack and I worked on together, beginning in 1940. He was a science fiction swashbuckler I created for Curtis Publishing, the company that put out the

Saturday Evening Post," Simon told the AP earlier this year. "They had decided to jump on the comic book bandwagon. Jack joined me with the second issue. Like Captain America, Blue Bolt got his powers from an injection, long before the baseball players were doing it."

For Timely, the duo created

create his ultimate counterpart," Simon told the AP.

"Cap is one of the great comic book icons, and as dangerous as the world is today—more than it was in the 1940s—we need him around more than ever to act as our moral compass," Simon said.

Ed Brubaker, whose recent

Simon wrote "Prez: First Teen President" for DC in 1973-74 as a four-issue series.

Jim Lee, co-publisher of DC Entertainment Inc., the parent company of DC Comics, called Simon a "creative virtuoso" whose "many contributions to DC Comics, both as a writer and an editor, are legion and will continue to be cherished by longtime fans, this one included."

Mark Evanier, a comic industry historian and Kirby biographer, noted that Simon, besides being able to write and draw, also knew how to edit comics.

"Joe himself was the first great real editor who brought to comics skills he'd learned elsewhere and had some perception of how to put a magazine together and how to make a professional looking publication," Evanier said Thursday. "He had some business acumen. He knew how to talk to publishers, he knew how to make deals."

He also knew the market, Evanier said, noting that Simon, along with Kirby, plunged head first into creating horror, crime, humor and romance comics in the aftermath of World War II.

Simon said earlier this year that creating the romance comics was a high point for him and Kirby because they "negotiated to own half of the property," something that had been an uncertain prospect in the industry.

"I'd like to think that we showed today's comic book writers and artists how they can do more than just make a living producing comic books and hold onto the fruits of their labors," he said.

Simon is survived by two sons, three daughters and eight grandchildren.



AP

In this Oct. 14, 2011 file photo, Joe Simon, co-creator of Captain America comic, is shown at the New York Comic Con fan convention in New York.

Captain America, debuting on the cover of "Captain America Comics" No. 1 with the champion of liberty throwing a solid right-hook at Adolf Hitler in December 1940, a year before the United States entered World War II.

"Jack and I read the newspapers and knew what was going on over in Europe. And there he was—Adolf Hitler, with his ridiculous moustache, high-pitched ranting and goose-stepping followers. He was the perfect bad guy, much better than anything we could have made up, so what we needed was to

runs writing Captain America for Marvel have been heaped with critical acclaim, called Simon a "pioneer in comics, a mover-and-shaker and probably far ahead of his time."

He said in an email that he even revamped a Simon-created character for his first assignment at DC.

"I personally owe my career in a few ways to Joe Simon—my first DC gig was a revamp of his 'Prez,' the teenage president, and I've spent almost eight years writing Captain America for Marvel," Brubaker said. "It's a sad day."



AP

In this undated image released by Boneau/Bryan-Brown, Taran the Irish wolfhound is shown.

Musical based on 'Because of Winn-Dixie' planned

NEW YORK (AP)—Plans are under way to create a musical based on Kate DiCamillo's book "Because of Winn-Dixie" with songs by Duncan Sheik and a real dog on stage.

Producers said Thursday they plan a workshop reading for the project this spring, followed by an out-of-town engagement and perhaps a spot on Broadway down the line. They've even found their star: Taran, an Irish Wolfhound, has been cast in the title role.

The musical, based on the 2000 novel, tells the story of a 10-year-old girl who gains confidence and rekindles her relationship with her father, thanks to a stray dog she finds one day at a Winn-Dixie supermarket. The novel was made into a film in 2005 starring Jeff Daniels, Cicely Tyson, Dave Matthews and Eva Marie Saint.

In addition to Sheik, who

won a Tony Award for writing the music for "Spring Awakening," the producers have tapped Nell Benjamin to write the lyrics and story. She earned a Tony nomination of "Legally Blonde."

John Tartaglia, who made his debut as a puppeteer with "The Muppets" at age 16 and earned a Tony nomination for his puppetry in "Avenue Q," will direct the project. The budget estimate is between \$6 million and \$7 million.

The animal director will be Bill Berloni, who has trained dogs for more than a dozen Broadway shows and discovered the original Sandy for "Annie." He found Taran, who was adopted from a breeder in Connecticut. The musical will also have about 15 human actors.

The producers are Gerald Goehring, Michael F. Mitri and Dorothy Berloni.

MTV names Katy Perry its 1st artist of the year

NEW YORK (AP)—Katy Perry's run of No. 1 singles has earned her the distinction of becoming MTV's first artist of the year.

Perry topped Adele after a spirited discussion among MTV's internal panel of experts, the network said Thursday. Adele's "Rolling in the Deep" was chosen top song of 2011, said Amy Doyle, the network's chief of music programming.

MTV also declared Skrillex its electronic dance music artist of the year over David Guetta.

Different parts of MTV would make "best of" lists in the past, but the network wanted to establish a franchise that brought all its online and TV arms together and emphasized MTV's music roots, Doyle said. The network, established in 1981, hopes it becomes an annual thing.

Seven panelists made the final choice, and their deliberations were featured in MTV programming this week.

"Rolling in the Deep" was an obvious selection as top song, Doyle said. Runners-up were Nicki Minaj's "Super Bass" and Rihanna's "We Found Love."

"I loved the song the moment I wrote it," Adele said. "The melody and the beat added some conviction to it. I think that's why people connected with it."

Perry's achievement of tying Michael Jackson's "Bad" as the only albums to yield five No. 1 singles was particularly impressive, Doyle said. Along with the title cut, "California Gurls," "E.T.," "Firework" and "Last Friday Night" (T.G.I.F.) all topped the charts. She's trying to beat the record with the current single "The One That Got Away."

"You just really felt her presence in pop culture throughout the year," Doyle said.

Skrillex, whose real name is Sonny Moore, describes his music as a combination of "dubstep, electro and glitch." MTV included the category of best electronic dance music artist to pay tribute to the way the style is taking off with its young viewers, she said.

MTV also asked its viewers to vote on their choice of the best live performances shown on MTV all year. Their choice was "Hurricane" by Thirty Seconds to Mars.



In this Nov. 20, 2011 file photo, singer Katy Perry arrives at the 39th Annual American Music Awards in Los Angeles.

Madonna to release first album in Live Nation deal



In this Dec. 4, 2011 file photo, director Madonna attends a special screening of "W.E." at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Material Girl is finally going to make good on her promise to produce new albums under an all-encompassing rights deal worth \$120 million that she signed with concert promoter Live Nation more than four years ago.

Madonna will release a new album in late March through Universal Music Group's Interscope Records, the label said Thursday.

Live Nation Entertainment Inc. will participate in the profits, if the album does well.

It will be her first album in five years and is part of a three-album agreement with Interscope. It will follow the late January release of the single "Gimme All Your Luvin'" and her halftime performance at the Super Bowl on Feb. 5.

Madonna broke from her longtime music backer, Warner Music Group, and was among the first of a host of megastars that Live Nation signed to huge rights deals that would give the concert promoter a share of revenue from touring, merchandise, fan clubs, sponsorships and even recorded music. Her deal covered 10 years.

Other pricey deals around that time included artists Jay-Z, Shakira, Nickelback and U2.

Live Nation has never had the ability to record, promote and distribute albums, so it has tied up with traditional recording companies to make its so-called "360 deals" work.

Jay-Z released his first album under his deal, "The Blueprint 3," with the help of Warner Music's

Atlantic label in September 2009. "Watch the Throne," the rapper's collaborative album with Kanye West, came out in August with an assist from Universal's Def Jam.

Madonna's manager, Guy Oseary, said in a statement that "we couldn't be happier" with the new arrangement. "We anticipate a very bright future at our new home."

The expensive signings have not quite worked out as expected for Live Nation. It issued \$25 million in new stock to pay Madonna in October 2007, but later found itself on the hook to make up the difference in cash when its stock price collapsed. Live Nation shares closed at \$8.23 on Thursday, down from \$21.45 the day it closed the deal with Madonna.

Phil Spector to take appeal to US Supreme Court

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A lawyer for imprisoned music legend Phil Spector is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review his murder conviction, arguing his constitutional rights were violated by the trial judge.

Attorney Dennis Riordan contends that Superior Court Judge Larry Paul Fidler became a witness for the prosecution by offering his opinion on an expert's testimony. The filing was expected to reach the court Friday. It cites the prosecution's use of the judge's videotaped comments and his picture during prosecution summations.

Stern named judge on 'America's Got Talent'

NEW YORK (AP)—Howard Stern will be joining the judges' panel on "America's Got Talent," and the NBC summer talent show will uproot itself from Los Angeles to accommodate the New York-based shock jock, the network said Thursday.

NBC confirmed weeks-old rumors of Stern's selection to join fellow "Talent" judges Howie Mandel and Sharon Osbourne. Nick Cannon remains host.

Stern, whose daily radio show airs on Sirius XM, is replacing Piers Morgan, who left "Talent" after last season to free up his busy schedule. Last winter, Morgan launched a weeknight interview program on CNN.

"Howard Stern's larger-than-life personality will bring a thrill-



In a Dec. 1, 2010 file photo, Howard Stern attends the Quentin Tarantino Friars Club Roast at the New York Hilton Hotel in New York.

ing new dynamic to 'America's Got Talent' starting this summer," said Paul Telegdy, NBC's president of alternative and late night

programming. "He's a proven innovator and his track record in broadcasting is truly remarkable."

The Parents Television Council, a watchdog group, wasted no time condemning NBC's choice on Thursday.

Its president, Tim Winter, called hiring Stern "an act of desperation for a flailing network," and slammed Stern as "a performer who is synonymous with shock, profanity and obscenity."

"Talent" bills itself as TV's only such competition show that is open to any age and any talent. Auditions for season seven began in October in major cities nationwide. But now, with Stern aboard, production of the live broadcast of the show will relocate to New York.

Underweight college student can't stomach dad's insults

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I'm an 18-year-old male living on my own in an apartment not far from my parents' home. They visit me often and take turns driving me to the local college because I don't have a car.

My parents tend to worry about me. I'm rather thin, but I eat healthy. My dad goes over the top with his concern about my weight and it is hurtful. He has called me a "caddaver" in front of friends. And when he drops me off after classes, he often says, "Now go eat something fattening!"

I have tried to discuss how his repeated comments affect my self-confidence, but am always met with, "I'm your father. I have every right to be concerned." Am I wrong to take offense at my dad's brand of concern? Is there anything I can do to evade these hurtful comments?

TWIG WITH FEELINGS



Dear Abby

DEAR TWIG: Your father's attempt to "help" you by ridiculing you in front of your contemporaries is insensitive. The fact that he is your father does not entitle him to be cruel.

If there is a student health center at your college, go there and talk to a medical professional about what is a healthy weight for your height and age, and whether any medical tests might be necessary to verify your health. If not, consult your family physician. This may provide the "proof" you need in discussions with your father. Some males fill out later than others.

You should also ask your mother to point out to your dad that what he's doing is counterproductive. Perhaps she can make him see the light. If that doesn't work, arrange other transportation to and from school so you will be less dependent on your father.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: A friend and I were talking about how wimpy a lot of guys in our generation are. We're both in our mid-20s and seldom meet guys who take charge.

Several times we have met guys who said they'd call and set up a date. We know they're interested because they have told our friends they'd like to date us again. But then they don't call. Try as we might to give them chances to ask us out, they usually don't.

I know that traditional dating rules are often discarded, but I don't want to be the aggressor. Their being "scared" isn't an acceptable excuse, much less an attractive quality. Why do women so often have to do all the work nowadays or end up alone?

PREFERS TRADITIONAL

DEAR PREFERS TRADITIONAL: Women do not have to do ALL the work in a relationship or risk remaining single for life. But they do have to shoulder a lot more of the responsibility than a generation ago as a result of the women's movement. (Yes, I know I'll catch "heck" for saying it.) As women have become more independent and aggressive, the old rules of romance have started to disappear.

Men aren't stupid. Their view is, "If women are willing to do the courting, why should men do it?" The guys you've described aren't wimps; their passivity hasn't turned other women off. Sending you messages through your friends instead of being direct and following through on their promises to call is business as usual for them. While their behavior may seem immature, it has worked for them before.

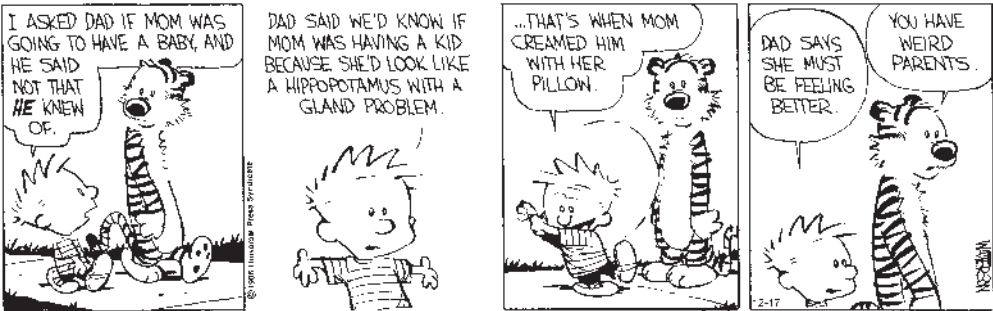
Don't give up hope. There are men who are interested in old-fashioned romance, but they are fewer in number. Be patient, keep looking and you'll find one.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

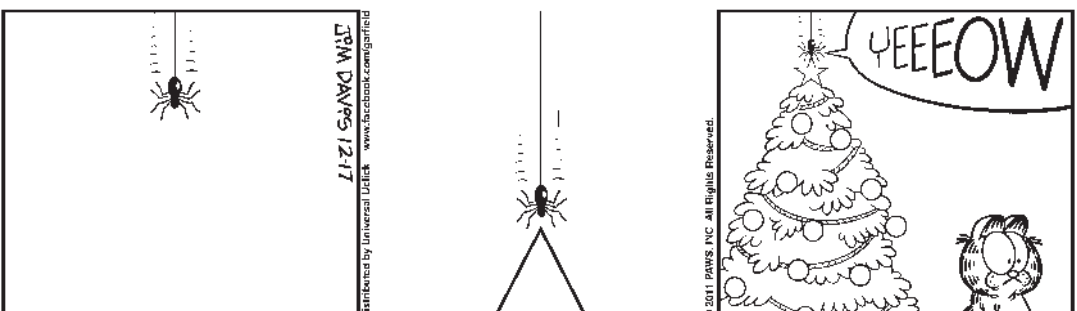
For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby—Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

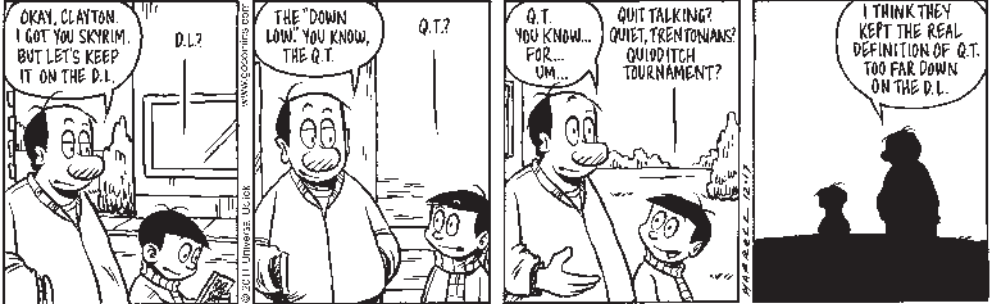
Calvin and Hobbes



Garfield®



Adam@home



The Duplex



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Platter
5 Actor
9 Small barrel
12 Scandi-navian city
13 Reed instru-ment
14 Bobby of hockey lore
15 Bivalve
16 Celebrity
17 Holly-wood trickery, for short
18 Dole's 1996 run-ning mate
19 Leary's drug of choice
20 Hack
21 Work with
23 Author Buscaglia
25 Defective
28 New York city
32 Bodily pouch

DOWN

33 Cook-ware?
34 Set off
36 Risked
37 "— the ramparts
38 "Abso-lutely"
39 Read cursorily
42 "— Miniver"
44 Quick cut
48 Crony
49 Regi-men
50 Greek vowel
51 Fool
52 Initial chip
53 Pizzeria fixture

Solution time: 27 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-17

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Milla Jovovich, 36; Bill Pullman, 58; Eugene Levy, 65; Ernie Hudson, 66.

Happy Birthday: Take a practical approach to life and make adjustments to fit the economic climate you live in. Open discussions may not be something you enjoy but getting everything out in the open will help you move forward without being questioned. Your insight and unique plans will allow you reach your goals. Your numbers are 3, 13, 26, 32, 35, 46, 48.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Take on responsibilities without making a fuss and show everyone what you are capable of doing. It will pay off monetarily in the end. The more you do, the more you'll receive. A relationship you thought was over will get a second chance. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You've got more going for you than you realize. Don't be afraid to follow your heart. You'll learn a lot from experiences that challenge you. Love and romance are highlighted. Nurture a relationship that means a lot to you. *****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Try your very best. Self-improvement projects will pay off, and what you learn along the way will turn into a valuable commodity. Try a new way of doing your job and you will be praised for your contribution. **

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Extra effort placed on preparation for the festive season will pay off. Your family will appreciate your thoughtfulness. Open your doors to

friends and neighbors and you will build strong allies in your community. Welcome change and you'll get positive results. ****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't let little aggravations get you down. Enjoy the spirit of the festive season. The more active you are, the more you will be appreciated. Short or long distance travel will shed a new light on an emotional situation you face. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Analyzing a situation will confuse you and lead to an altercation. Take a wait-and-see approach. Being accused or accusing someone who challenges you must be avoided if you don't want to ruin your relationship. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You need a change of scenery. A short trip or visiting a friend will do you good. A gift, bonus, settlement or debt is heading your way. Dealing with institutions or old partners will bring a favorable conclusion. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't let uncertainty be your downfall. Make up your mind and make a move. Indecisiveness will cause you to lose control of the outcome. Love is in the stars, and action should be taken. *****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Easy does it. You'll raise eyebrows if you are too bold. Give freedom to others and you will get the same in return. Stick close to home and avoid any situation that can put you in a precarious position. Clear thinking will be required. **

EUGENIA LAST
THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY
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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You've got your finger on the pulse of whatever is going on around you, so make your move and make it count. Commitment, romance and setting new personal goals will lead to greater security and happiness. *****

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Take hold of your life and your future. Do your own thing and follow your heart. A good idea can turn into a lucrative business. Have confidence in who you are and what you can do. A partnership must be monitored. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Refrain from doing too much running about. You will face obstacles if you are too quick to judge others. Emotional upset can be expected if you question a partner or someone close to you. Self-deception will lead to self-doubt. ***

Birthday Baby: You are intense, caring and strong-willed. You strive for perfection.

Eugenia's Web sites: eugenialast.com for confidential consultations, myspace.com/eugenialast for Eugenia's blog, astroadvice.com for fun

SUDOKU
Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

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WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

AMERICAN ELK Solution: 7 letters

H P S M E A S G T A O C E S S
A L A E G T N F L A C Z B E M
R N A R N I A F O H A L D N E
E N A I K S A R C R E G E I A
M S O C R L E R G A E P H T D
S P O I F E A S T I S S S K O
D L I A T N P N H A M E T R W
N B T W O A U M D E V I A A S
I U I M H R T E I I L N W B P
H G P N G O D E V G G T B S O
S L A T S O O R G E A E E R T
M E W L O W U V L E H T S R T
A E L W R S O L E A V E S T E
E U S E D I H C V S H R U B D
B D E E P S R E T N U H E R D

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Alfalfa, Aspen, Bark, Beams, Behave, Bleat, Bugle, Bulls, Calif, Coat, Cows, Digest, Forest, Grass, Graze, Grunt, Harems, Herd, Hide, Hinds, Hooves, Hunters, Imperial, Leaves, Locking, Mane, Meadows, Migrate, Monarch, Orange, Parkland, Points, Sedge, Senses, Shed, Shelter, Shrub, Speed, Spotted, Stag, Survive, Swim, Times, Tree, Twigs, Vegetation, Wapiti, Wooded

Yesterday's Answer: Schools

Teach the Children's Reading Foundation, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



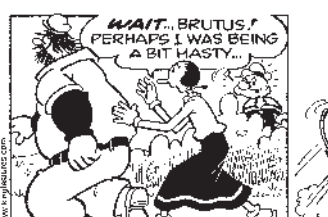
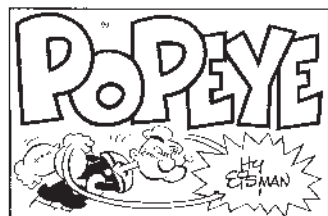
Differences: 1. Window curtains have changed. 2. Palm trees have no palm dots. 3. Nightgown has black bow. 4. King is different. 5. More cutters in hair. 6. Box is different.

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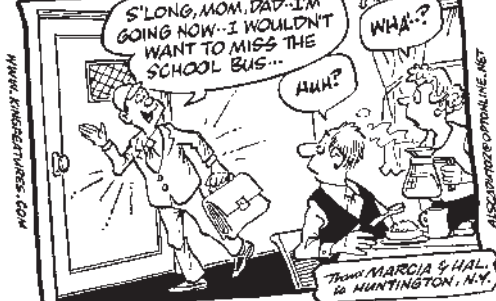


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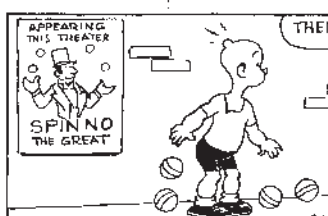
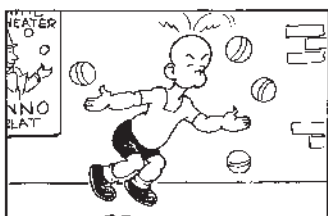
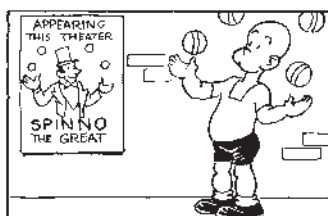
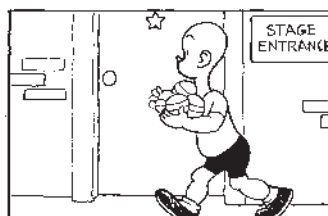
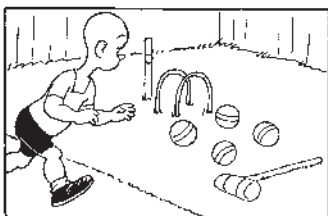
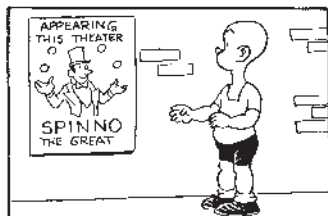
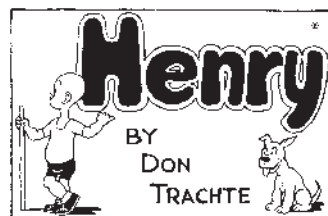
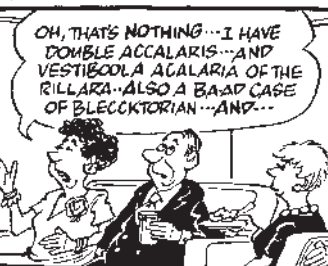
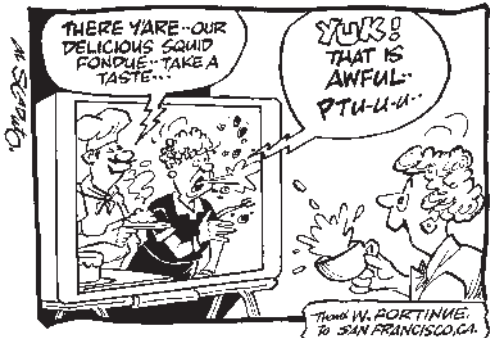
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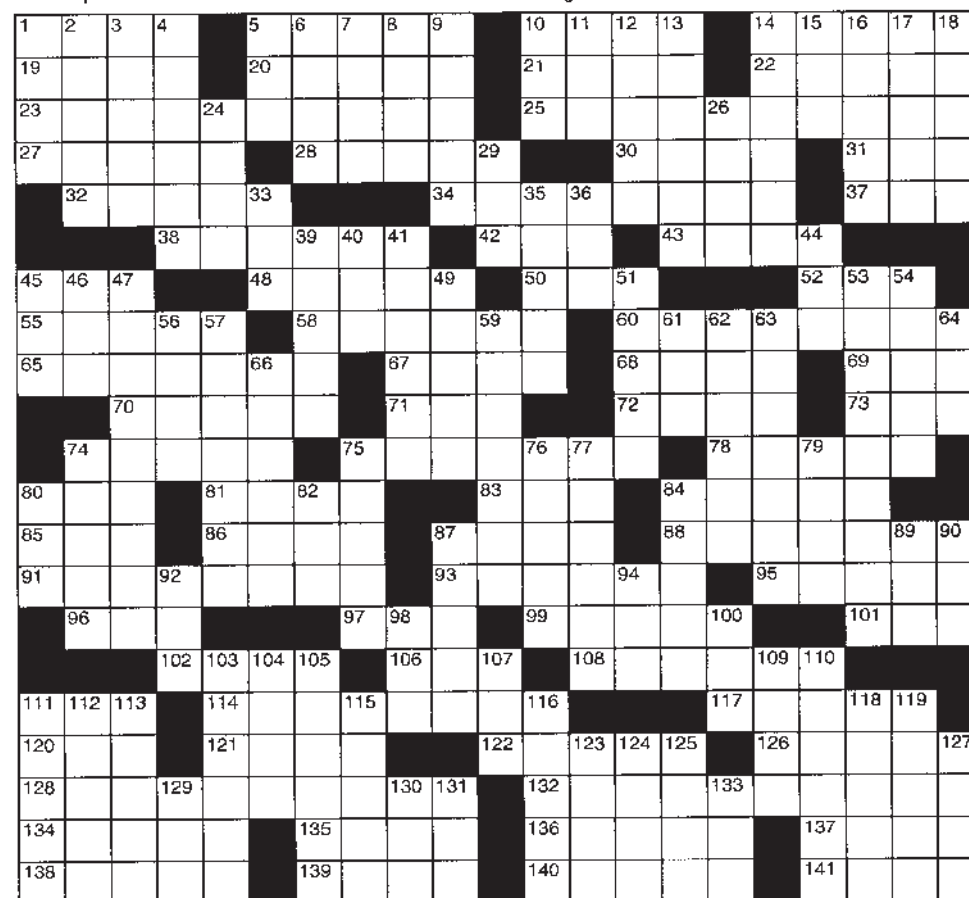
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130 Klutz
131 Humor
133 Tie the knot



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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

1. LITERATURE: Who wrote the "Little House on the Prairie" book series?
2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the official animal of Oklahoma?
3. HISTORY: By what other name did Southerners refer to the Battle of Bull Run?

4. PERSONALITIES: What was the first name of pirate Captain Kidd?
5. MOVIES: The film "Schindler's List" won how many Oscars?
6. GEOGRAPHY: What is the ap-

- proximate total square mileage of land in Hong Kong?
7. TELEVISION: Who played the character of Norm on "Cheers"?
8. INVENTIONS: What did Robert Goddard develop in 1926?
9. U.S. PRESIDENTS: How

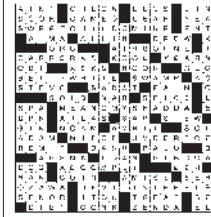
- many years did Franklin Roosevelt serve as president?
10. LANGUAGE: What common vegetable's Latin name is Solanum tuberosum?

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10. Potato
9. 12 years, 42 days
8. Liquid-fuel rocket
7. Buffalo
6. 407

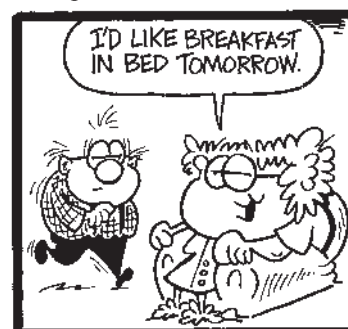
5. Seven
4. William
3. Manassas
2. Buffalo
1. Laura Ingalls Wilder

Saturday's Answers



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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• 5-Liner	\$24	\$39
• 3-Liner with picture	\$24	\$42
• 5-Liner with picture	\$36	\$57

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Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:

- All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

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Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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All advertising in the Saipan Tribune are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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Ryan, Abraham lead Falcons to rout of Jags



ATLANTA (AP)—Ho hum, another winning season for the Atlanta Falcons.

That's not such a big deal anymore.

This team has much higher goals.

Putting together their most complete effort of the season, the Falcons clinched a fourth straight winning record with a 41-14 rout of the Jacksonville Jaguars on Thursday night. Matt Ryan had another big game, throwing three touchdown passes in less than three quarters of work, and John Abraham terrorized rookie quarterback Blaine Gabbert with 3 1/2 sacks.

Atlanta (9-5) strengthened its hold on an NFC wild card, shrugging off the immediate accomplishment of another above-.500 finish.

"Our expectations are much higher than winning seasons," coach Mike Smith said. "I'm glad we've been able to accomplish that as an organization and a football team. But believe me, it's not one of those expectations we really want to talk about. If we're where we think we are as an organization and a football team, that's expected each and every year."

It wasn't so long ago that nine wins was a big deal. The Falcons went through the first 42 years of their existence without so much as back-to-back winning seasons. All that changed when Smith and general manager Thomas Dimitroff took over in 2008.

Since then, Atlanta has been to the playoff two times and is closing in on a third appearance.

"I can't speak to the people who came before, but I know since Thomas and I had the opportunity to be here, we've just kind of put our heads down and gone to work," Smith said. "When you do that, good things usually happen. We are not finished, believe me. Our expectations and internal goals are much higher than having a winning football season."

This one was over by halftime. Atlanta led 27-0 when the teams trotted to the locker room, Gabbert and the shellshocked Jaguars (4-10) saddled with a net passing total of minus-1 yard.

Atlanta stretched out its lead to 41-0 before Jacksonville scored on a blocked punt. Going back to the previous week, when the Falcons overcame a 16-point halftime deficit at Carolina, they ripped off 65 points in a row over five quarters.

Now that's more like it from a team that was projected as a Super Bowl contender but had not quite lived up to expectations.

"I feel like we've hit our stride," said Roddy White, who had 10 catches for 135 yards and became just the eighth receiver in NFL history with 80 receptions and 1,000 yards in five straight seasons.

Gabbert had one of his worst games in a miserable rookie season, coughing up the ball twice on hits by Abraham. Both fumbles led to Atlanta scores, with defensive tackle Corey Peters scooping up the second one and trotting to the end zone early in the third quarter for a touchdown that ended any thought of the Jaguars getting back in the game.

"It wasn't just me," said Abraham, who came into the game with only five sacks on the season. "The whole team was able to get to the quarterback."

Ryan was 19 of 26 for 224 yards and three touchdowns, with a season-high rating of 137.3. White caught two of the



Atlanta Falcons defensive end John Abraham (55) hits Jacksonville Jaguars quarterback Blaine Gabbert (11) to cause a fumble during the first half of an NFL football game Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011, in Atlanta.

Lions' Suh says little about stomp, suspension

ALLEN PARK, Mich. (AP)—Ndamukong Suh is back with the Detroit Lions. And he's not interested in rehashing the past.

Suh declined to answer questions Wednesday about his two-game suspension and car accident after rejoining his teammates for the first time in two-plus weeks.

"The most important thing right now is this football team and not me individually," Suh said.

The reigning Defensive Rookie of the Year was forced by the NFL to sit out two games without pay for stepping on the right arm of Green Bay Packers offensive lineman Evan Dietrich-Smith during a loss on Thanksgiving Day.

He was defiant during his postgame news conference that day and after the Lions criticized his conduct the next day, Suh followed up on his Facebook page with an apology to his teammates, organization and fans. Why he hasn't—at least publicly—said sorry to Dietrich-Smith was one of the questions Suh left unanswered.

Suh said he wouldn't change his game after his fourth fine from the league earlier this year. On Wednesday, he said nothing has altered that mind-set.

"I think I can pretty much stick with

that, playing within the rules and continuing to play between the whistles," Suh said.

Suh was banned from Lions headquarters during his suspension. He returned to his hometown of Portland, Ore., and was in a car accident on his first weekend away from the team. Police decided not to investigate further after two women claimed they were injured during the wreck.

He wouldn't respond to questions about the crash. Suh seemed aware that unflattering things have been written and said about him, but doesn't look or sound concerned.

"It's not going to make me cry at night," he said.

Of more interest to Suh and the rest of the Lions is the team's quest to make the playoffs for the first time since the 1999 season. The team lost at New Orleans and barely beat Minnesota at home without Suh.

Detroit (8-5) plays at Oakland (7-6) this weekend in a game it needs to win to keep its favorable spot in the NFC wild-card race.

Even though Suh has been on his own since the suspension, Detroit coach Jim Schwartz said he looked about the same as he did before being forced to stay out of the building.

"He's obviously healthy," Schwartz said. "And we need all the healthy players we can get, particularly for this last stretch."

Suh didn't think anything was out of the ordinary about his first workout with teammates in a while.

"Practice to me was normal," he said. "I wasn't out of breath."

He saved some breath in a calm, but terse, session with reporters following practice. Suh acknowledged needing to be accountable for his actions, but said answering every question from the media was not one of his responsibilities.

"It doesn't always involve you guys," he said. "It's been handled. You guys make your speculations and then you report what you think is right and not right."

Notes: Lions DT Nick Fairley went through at least part of Wednesday's practice while banged-up players CB Eric Wright, S Louis, CB Aaron Berry, LB Justin Durant and DE Lawrence Jackson were held out because of injuries while reporters had access. ... Starting CB Chris Houston, who has missed two games with an injured left knee, practiced and said he expects to play at Oakland. RB Kevin Smith was on the field and was optimistic about playing Sunday after missing the Vikings game.

Panthers' Smith says no comparing Newton to Tebow

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Panthers wide receiver Steve Smith said when it comes to comparing Cam Newton to Tim Tebow there is no comparison.

Smith said time will prove Newton is by far the better NFL quarterback.

"If Tebow is standing next to me I would tell it to his face—come check me out in five years, Jack, and you'll know who's the best quarterback," Smith said.

Newton is 4-9 as a starter, although he's put up incredible individual numbers. He has a chance to become the first quarterback in NFL history to throw for 4,000 yards and run for 500 in the same season. He already has 554 yards rushing and needs only 427 yards passing to reach 4,000.

Tebow is 6-1 as a starter this year for Denver with five impressive come-from-behind victories. But Smith believes Denver's defense isn't getting enough credit for the Broncos playoff push.

Smith said Newton's versatility makes him a better quarterback.

"Everybody wants to crown Tebow as a versatile quarterback," Smith said. "Versatile to me means you can throw the ball very accurately, run the ball and create things. The only he can create is running. He isn't very accurate."

Tebow has won more games than Newton this year, but that doesn't matter to Smith.

"You can't compare Cam to Tebow. I think Cam's a more complete player," Smith said. "Tebow has the wins. But everybody wants to crown Tebow. Yes, he has the will to win. I think Tebow is no different than any other professional (in that way). But Tebow has a great opportunity to play behind a great defense."

Denver has allowed the fourth-fewest points in the league; the injury-plagued Panthers defense ranks 22nd in points allowed.

Smith pointed to Tebow's statistics in the first three quarters of last Sunday's game against Chicago—he was 3 of 16—as an example of his inaccurate arm and lack of accuracy in the passing game.

"That's not a versatile quarterback," Smith said.

Still, Tebow has been able to do what Newton hasn't—win games late.

The Panthers have led in 12 of 13 games this year, but have lost six contests when they've led in the fourth quarter. On the other hand, Tebow has five game-winning drives in the fourth quarter this year and six for his career.

In Denver, the fourth quarter has become known as "Tebow Time."

Panthers center Ryan Kalil said he doesn't see too many similarities between the two quarterbacks.

"They are two different players," Kalil said. "I don't know much about Tebow other than the highlights, but I think they're different. If I had to choose one it would be my guy. Everyone keeps tagging this thing that he's a winner, but it's not one man, it's a football team. I think they're playing good as a football team."

Kalil said Newton is a once-in-a-lifetime quarterback.

"I do," Kalil said. "He's young and he has a lot of room to grow. I think he's already shown he's pretty darn phenomenal."

Jaguars owner Wayne Weaver, a deal that was unanimously approved by NFL owners a day earlier.

"You've just got to keep fighting," Gabbert said. "Things didn't go our way early, but what can you do? It's football."

On the first snap of the game, Michael Turner burst off left guard for 15 yards, and the Falcons were off and running. Ryan capped the opening drive by stepping up to avoid the pressure, flipping a short pass to Jones, then watching the rookie turn on an impressive burst of speed for a 29-yard touchdown.

Gabbert got an idea of what he'd be up against on his first snap: Abraham shrugged off a blocker and threw the quarterback for a 10-yard loss. The rookie finally completed a pass on the final play of the opening quarter, but Sean Weatherspoon sniffed out the screen and slammed Mercedes Lewis for a 4-yard loss.

Matt Bryant kicked a 33-yard field goal that made it 10-0, then another

brutal mistake by the Jaguars early in the second quarter helped turn this one into a rout. Jarrett Dillard let a punt slip right through his hands, and Weatherspoon fell on it at the Jacksonville 5. The next play, Turner rumbled in the end zone standing to make it 17-0.

The Falcons weren't done, not by a long shot. Ryan finished off a nine-play, 72-yard by hooking up with White in the back on the end zone on a 6-yard touchdown, a pass that Tony Gonzalez was nearly in position to catch as well.

Now down 24-0, the Jaguars couldn't even get off the field without turning it over again. Abraham popped the ball loose from Gabbert, and after a wild scramble Curtis Lofton finally fell on it at the Jacksonville 19. That set up Bryant's second field goal, a 31-yarder on the final play of the half.

"I've just got to get rid of the ball," Gabbert said. "I can't take those sacks and those fumbles. That's completely on me."

Heat host scrimmage for season-ticket holders



MIAMI (AP)—LeBron James was the first one on the floor, swishing the first shot he took. Dwyane Wade arrived with a candy cane behind his right ear. Chris Bosh gestured to the fans with his usual intensity.

Miami's stars gave fans what they wanted Thursday night.

But a Heat rookie might have provided the biggest surprise.

Norris Cole staked his claim for playing time right away this season, scoring 21 points in Miami's open scrimmage played before about 9,000 season-ticket holders. Cole figures to enter the season as the backup to Mario Chalmers, who re-signed with Miami earlier this month.

"I'm treating every practice like a game," Cole said. "I've got a great opportunity here and I'm doing all I can to show that I belong with this team."

Cole has had success at American Airlines Arena before. He was on the same floor for Cleveland State's appearance in the 2009 NCAA tournament, scoring 22 points in a first-round upset of Wake Forest and 17 more in a second-round loss to Arizona.

"Norris has been great since we got him," said Heat assistant coach David Fizdale, who ran one of the teams while fellow assistant Keith Askins handled the other, while Heat coach Erik Spoelstra and assistant Ron Rothstein observed from seats near midcourt. "He's really astute. He's very mature. He's here early every day. He's the last to leave. Kind of kid you want to work with and get better."

Cole worked with James at times in Ohio this summer, and said he had some knowledge of the Heat system before he showed up for camp. He said he's taking a simple approach to camp.

"Hard work," Cole said. "I'm trying to help this team win a championship. That's what it's all about. That's all that it's about."

The open scrimmage was a clear thank-you of sorts for season-ticket holders, all of whom packed into the lower bowl of the arena. When the doors opened about an hour before game time, fans sprinted into the building, since most of the seats were first-come, first-serve. They roared when public address announcer Michael Baiamonte greeted them with "Welcome home, Heat fans," and they got louder when the first surprise of the night arrived.

Instead of accessing the court through the private tunnel emerging from their locker room, Heat players and staff came down the arena steps, slapping hands with fans.

"It's been too long," Spoelstra told the crowd.

James took the first shot of the warmups, a 16-footer that went in and drew a roar. Some of the hijinks were downright comical—Wade throwing a behind-the-back pass to James, who then went behind-the-back

to Joel Anthony for a score, or Udonis Haslem wagging his finger menacingly to the opposing bench, or even Askins arguing with an official for a goaltending call in the first half.

Mostly, though, it was about getting in work. It's only about two weeks spanning first practice to first real game this season, about half the normal time in seasons not compacted by labor-related issues.

"We're looking forward to this season," Spoelstra told the crowd. "You're going to have a heck of a time in this arena here this season, all right? Enjoy."

Haslem led all scorers with 23 points, James also had 21, and Wade finished with 17.

The last game of the NBA's most recent season was on the same court, of course, when Dallas beat Miami to clinch the 2011 title in six games. And fans in Miami were angst-ridden for months over the status of the lockout, fearing that would be the last game played in any NBA city for a year or perhaps more.

Of course, a deal eventually got done, and just about everyone from the core of last season's Eastern Conference champions is back. Heat owner Micky Ari-

Miami Heat shooting guard Dwyane Wade smiles during a Miami Heat NBA basketball scrimmage on Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011, in Miami.

AP



son and team CEO Nick Arison were in their customary courtside spots, a few seats away from team president Pat Riley, who watched the proceedings closely.

"It feels like old times," Bosh said. "It feels like we're just tweaking a couple of things. We're just pushing each other to be better. It's good to be back. I've been looking forward to this for a long time."

Shane Battier, Eddy Curry, Mike Miller and Eddie House were held out with various injuries. That didn't stop fans from chanting "We want Shane" at least twice, the new Heat forward acknowledging the cries with a broad smile each time. Battier and Cole figure to be the only two players who weren't on last year's team that will begin this season in the rotation.

The Heat picked up Cole on draft night for his speed and savvy, both of which were on full display.

It was Cole's "coming out party," Micky Arison said on Twitter during the game. And Cole's new teammates were impressed as well.

"He can play the game of basketball," Wade said. "You can't teach what he has."

Jordan: New CBA helps, opposed Paul deal to Lakers

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Michael Jordan didn't exactly shed any tears when the proposed trade of Chris Paul to the Los Angeles Lakers was nixed.

The Bobcats owner likes the idea of competitive balance in the NBA.

And while Jordan never expressed his opinion to NBA Commissioner David Stern on the trade, he said Wednesday that such moves simply don't help smaller market teams.

"As a small market (owner) I'm very supportive of being able to keep your star player," Jordan said in an afternoon press conference prior to Paul being reportedly dealt to the Clippers. "That whole market is determined by that one individual. You want to make it very difficult for that guy to leave. Not that he can't leave, but to understand the circumstances if he does leave."

"I can't imagine if I'm in the Hornets scenario that I would want Chris Paul to leave. You want to keep your star."

That said, Jordan would like to land a headline player—someone like Paul.

"I would definitely go after a guy like that," Jordan said of the Hornets star guard. "Obviously we have the cap space next year to do so. I would do everything I can get to try to get a player like that."

Jordan said he wants every team in the league to have a chance to win the NBA championship including the Bobcats, who haven't won a playoff game since coming into the

league in 2004.

He believes the new collective bargaining agreement is far from perfect saying "it's not ultimately where we want to be," but believes it's a big step toward creating parity in the league—something he fought hard to attain during negotiations.

Jordan, who as a player once told then-Washington Wizards owner Abe Pollin during the 1998 labor negotiations that if he couldn't make a profit he should sell the team, aggravated some current players when he took a hardline stance on revenue sharing during the lockout.

Jordan's stance prompted many players to react negatively with Washington guard Nick Young saying on Twitter he wouldn't wear Air Jordans anymore and Golden State wing Klay Thompson going as far as to call him a hypocrite.

On Wednesday, Jordan smiled and laughed before responding to questions about how some perceive him as a "hardline owner."

He said things aren't the same as they were in 1998.

"We have gone through some difficult (financial) situations and we have 22 teams losing money—so obviously the model is not correct," Jordan said. "I understood what some of the players said in terms of what they thought I should be doing. But my dedication was to the community and to this team."

"I would have been more hypocritical if I'm sitting here supporting the players. Ultimately when these kids grow

up and hopefully can get to my side of the table they will understand what my stance was."

Jordan said he believes the new CBA will help level the playing field for small market teams over time because of increased luxury tax implications for big-market teams that continuously go over the salary cap to sign free agents.

He also likes the revenue sharing aspect of the new CBA, saying it too will help the smaller markets succeed.

It all comes at a good time for the Bobcats.

Now in Jordan's fourth year as owner, the Bobcats are essentially starting over.

Marred in what he felt like an endless cycle of mediocrity—battling for the final spot in the playoffs every season—the Bobcats decided to trade away their two best players last year in Gerald Wallace and Stephen Jackson and began to build with an eye toward the future.

They're banking on lottery picks Kemba Walker and Bismack Biyombo being cornerstones of the franchise.

And they're expected to be very active next summer in free agency.

They currently have in excess of \$20 million available under the 2012-13 NBA salary cap.

"We were vying for that eighth and ninth spot and we looked at that and said, 'How can we get to be one of those one, two, three or four teams?'" Jordan said. "To do that you have to grab assets and that's what we did. We

had to create flexibility."

Jordan said the Bobcats don't have much room to maneuver under this year's cap, but that will change next year.

"Our flexibility next year is going to be pretty good," Jordan said. "It puts us in a very good place."

Jordan doesn't believe his stance in labor negotiations will keep free agents from signing in Charlotte.

However, on paper, the Bobcats don't look like a very talented team. And that could be a deterrent.

Coach Paul Silas knows that, but he's not concerned about it.

Silas has a knack for getting the most out of players. Last year he helped jumpstart Kwame Brown's career and instilled a needed measure of confidence in point guard D.J. Augustin following the departure of former Bobcats coach Larry Brown.

"The attitude of the team is just tremendous," Silas said. "Guys are working hard and there is no nonsense going on. Every time we're out here, we're working hard and that says a lot. It will give us a chance."

"Talent-wise it's going to be difficult. But I want them to understand that winning is hard and you have to come with it every night. Come with it."

Guard Gerald Henderson said he thinks the Bobcats can become a perennial playoff team, but added "it won't happen overnight."

"We have some good talent and we're looking to rebuild,"

Henderson said. "We did lose two of our best players last year so that makes more opportunity for guys this year. We feel like we have enough talent to compete in this league... Our goal this year is to make the playoffs. We feel like we can do it."

"Sure, everybody is counting us out, but it's all on us. We have to come together as a team and focus on that."

Henderson said he tries not to listen to the naysayers in the Charlotte community who argue the Bobcats will struggle while in rebuilding mode and be irrelevant.

He believes that's a defeatist attitude.

"People know the really good teams in the league and people know some of the other teams," he said. "Where we fit in between there is up for interpretation. But the numbers at the end will determine that. We just have to win as many games as we can."

Just because the Bobcats are young—and not particularly tall by NBA standards after losing Brown to the Golden State Warriors this week—doesn't mean Jordan is writing off this season.

He thinks the Bobcats will win more games than a lot of people think.

"I think this is not a wasted season because who knows how good we can be?" Jordan said. "We've got some good pieces that can help us get to the playoffs. I'm not waiting until next year. I think we have a good quality basketball team this year."

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	10	3	0	.769	396	274
N.Y. Jets	8	5	0	.615	327	270
Buffalo	5	8	0	.385	288	341
Miami	4	9	0	.308	256	246
South						
y-Houston	10	3	0	.769	330	208
Tennessee	7	6	0	.538	266	251
Jacksonville	4	10	0	.286	207	293
Indianapolis	0	13	0	.000	184	382
North						
Baltimore	10	3	0	.769	320	202
Pittsburgh	10	3	0	.769	282	198
Cincinnati	7	6	0	.538	285	270
Cleveland	4	9	0	.308	178	254
West						
Denver	8	5	0	.615	269	302
Oakland	7	6	0	.538	290	354
San Diego	6	7	0	.462	324	299
Kansas City	5	8	0	.385	173	305
NATIONAL CONFERENCE						
East						
N.Y. Giants	7	6	0	.538	324	349
Dallas	7	6	0	.538	317	281
Philadelphia	5	8	0	.385	297	292
Washington	4	9	0	.308	229	290
South						
x-New Orleans	10	3	0	.769	415	286
Atlanta	9	5	0	.643	341	281
Carolina	4	9	0	.308	313	355
Tampa Bay	4	9	0	.308	232	370
North						
y-Green Bay	13	0	0	1.000	466	278
Detroit	8	5	0	.615	367	305
Chicago	7	6	0	.538	301	255
Minnesota	2	11	0	.154	274	364
West						
y-San Francisco	10	3	0	.769	307	182
Seattle	6	7	0	.462	246	259
Arizona	6	7	0	.462	253	288
St. Louis	2	11	0	.154	153	326
x-clinched playoff spot						
y-clinched division						
Yesterday's Game						
Atlanta 41, Jacksonville 14						

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Khan makes appeal following loss to Peterson



LONDON (AP)—British boxer Amir Khan is hoping to secure a rematch with Lamont Peterson after launching an appeal against the judges' scoring in his split-decision loss to the American in their light-welterweight title fight.

"We'll find out in the next five to seven days if the decision is overturned," Khan told Sky Sports News on Thursday. "If that's the case, I will give him a rematch to settle the score."

The 25-year-old Englishman lost his WBA and IBF titles in the defeat in Washington on Saturday after being deducted points on two occasions for pushing.

International Boxing Federation President Daryl Peoples confirmed to The Associated Press that Khan's camp has also appealed against referee Joseph Cooper's decision to deduct points.

"We have just asked Golden Boy Promotions for a DVD of the tape so I can review it with the Champion-



Amir Khan, left, of England, fights Lamont Peterson, right, during a boxing match, Saturday, Dec. 10, 2011, in Washington.

AP

ships Chairman (Lindsey Tucker)," Peoples said.

Khan claimed the scorecards were changed before the results were read out by the ring announcer.

"I got told I won the fight by some-

one at Golden Boy Promotions who had seen the scorecards, and (ring announcer) Michael Buffer said the same thing to me, before they were taken off him and changed," Khan said. "It's never taken so long after a fight."

PROA

From Page 28

in the third canto as it amassed a daunting 68-35 margin with 10 minutes left in regulation.

Alex Lauron was Andhok's only glimmer of hope; he scored the first 15 points for the team in the second half and points were few and far between from anyone else.

Throughout the match, Andhok's shooters never found their marks and though Lauron fought hard down low for some put-backs, Proa's offense was simply too much to handle on the other end.

Proa's Joshua Sablan delivered 10 points in the third quarter surge. He finished with 17 to lead Proa, while

Lauron scrambled for a game-high 20 in defeat.

FGC 91, Ol'Aces 82

In the late match, Ol'Aces worked out an early 18-25 advantage in the first quarter as Peter Camacho and Romeo Iginoef hooked up for 14 points out of the gate.

FGC managed seven the hard way, due to the physical defensive strategy put on by Ol'Aces.

FGC battled back in the second period, but still trailed by a point, 45-46, at halftime.

This time it was Ol'Aces' Tony Diaz and Mike Olaitiman teaming up for 14 markers that helped keep their team out of the rear view. FGC sunk nine free throws in the period as Ol'Aces stuck

to their guns on defense.

FGC's Kae Bernardo opened up a can in the third period in the form of 12 points to push his team ahead, 71-64, heading into crunch time.

Unfortunately, Ol'Aces wore out the referee's whistle early in the match, and it came back to bite them as Camacho, Olaitiman, and Iginoef were all shown the exit in the second half.

Remarkably, the shorthanded Ol'Aces drained a 3-pointer late in the third quarter and five more in the fourth, three of which by Diaz, but FGC protected the ball well enough to move on.

FGC's Bernardo and Lerio Pagarao combined for 55 points in the match, while Ol'Aces' Diaz led the field with 29 on the short end.

First Game

Proa 84 – Sablan 17, Iguel 15, Villacrusis 14, Barcinas 9, Rabauliman 8, Mendiola 6, Lizama 6, Babauta 4, Valdez 3, Chariton 2.

Andhok's 54 – Lauron 20, Umali 11, Tenorio 9, Abedes 5, Montano 4, Artates 2, Llagas 2.

Scoring by quarters: 21-10, 48-27, 68-35, 84-54.

Second Game

FGC 91 – Bernardo 23, Pagarao 22, Basila 14, Yabut 11, Santos 8, Babauta 5, David 4, Lerio 3.

Ol'Aces 82 – T. Diaz 29, E. Diaz 12, Camacho 12, Rangamar 10, Olaitiman 10, Iginoef 9.

Scoring by quarters: 18-25, 45-46, 71-64, 91-82.

THREE

From Page 28

team Snipers, 9-8, in a back-and-forth chess match for the Master's Cup held at Jonny's.

IT&E Kamote's is made up of Kay-sie Aquino, Jun Baltazar, Ernie Domingo, George Medina, Jun and Michelle Olita, and Eric Pascual.

On Thursday, second-ranked SOS defeated Oh Yeah!, 8-6, to win the B-Fanihi Bud Cup, while top-ranked Gaiana-B bored over the seventh place Skoregazzums, 8-2, in the B-Flame Tree finals.

SOS Akiramenia is made up of Manny Blas, Justin Casama, John C. Camacho, Jeremy Koshiro, Alfred Muna, Alejandro Prado, Naomi Samura, and James Villacrusis.

Gaian-B includes Carter Calma,

Steve Chae, Derek Sablan, Kento Togawa, Felix Travilla, Roxanne Wakit, and Eddie Villagomez.

IT&E Kamote's and Gaiana-B both ran the table in their divisions, taking the Bud Light Cup after finishing their regular seasons in first place.

SOS finished second place on the year, but upsetting sister-team Echose-rong Kamote's in the first round.

On Tuesday, the Sabalu Boys went out with a win, 11-4, in a road match held at Bammy's Bar over the fourth-ranked GCC Carpenters (156-114) to cap an unreal 37-game lead over the division. The win improved the team's win-loss record to 209-61.

Notably, Sabalu's Ray and Everette Indalecio, Alejandro Prado, and Carter Calma finished first through fourth on the individual statistics list out of a field of 69.

Ray Indalecio maintained 21.50 Points Per Dart in 30 games with 2.95 Marks Per Round in 33 games for a league-best Weighted Average of 53.96.

Everette Indalecio recorded 20.98 PPD in 31 games with 2.86 MPR in 32 games for a 52.44 WA; Prado turned in 20.98 PPD in 12 games with 2.83 MPR in 10 games for a 52.11 WA; and Calma managed 20.15 PPD with 2.88 MPR in 29 games for a 51.78 WA.

D'Pirates swept the B-League podium as Sabalu's sister-teams Delubyo (172-98) and Mixed Bloodshooters 2 (169-101) rounded out the second and third spots.

Delubyo romped eighth place Om-bre Za (103-167), 12-3, at home, while Mixed Blood 2 bested Es'y Kitchen's fifth-ranked Kamote's Shawarma Boys (152-118), 9-6, in a home match.

In other results, sixth-ranked Jonny's Dosukebe Boys finished its run with a 10-5 road draw victory over last place K-1 Snickers and No. 9 Assashunz of VFW upset seventh place Strike Force, 8-7, at home.

On Wednesday, Anie's Imuza closed out with a 9-6 win over ninth-ranked World-C (96-174) in a home draw held at Bar Gaia.

The win was enough to maintain first place over the division, despite a nice last-ditch effort by runner-up One Shot (184-86).

Anies Imuza finished its season with an 187-83 card, just three games ahead of One Shot.

One Shot went into D'Pirates and outgunned sixth place Lucky Shot (115-155), 11-4, for a respectable second place run.

D'Pirates Yotsketch Boys (177-93)

took one on the cheek from fourth seed Sparks (160-110), 5-10, but still managed a third place finish overall.

Meanwhile, No. 7 I Like It (112-158), of Joe's Steakhouse, snuck past eighth-place Jonny's Night Hawks (102-168), 8-7; and Naked Fish's Oh! MG (142-128) edged out caboose squad, Gaiana-C (61-209), 8-7, on the road at Gaia.

Notably, Anies Imuza's Roderick Osorio topped a field of 69 players in the individual statistics, maintaining a 19.62 PPD with 2.92 MPR in 36 games for a 51.74 WA.

His teammates Mark Butac (45.84WA) and Mark Estrada (44.37WA) finished third and sixth on the list, while One Shot's Gus Ybanez (48.33WA) and Dexter Mendiola (45.20WA) with Yotsketch's Galus Gille (44.46WA) came in second, fourth and fifth, respectively.

SORT OF

From Page 28

Clippers jumped in. Maybe so.

The real consequences of the swap won't be known at least until next year's draft picks have played a sizeable chunk of the season, but this much we already know: Stern pulled the rug out from under the Lakers, and didn't do the Rockets and Celtics any favors. The only way this qualifies as competitive is by making more teams bad.

The move makes the Clippers as good as they've ever been, maybe even competitive in the crowded Los Angeles market. Paul drove the Lak-

ers crazy last season in the Western Conference playoff while carrying a Hornets team barely half as talented as the one he'll join with the Clippers. Emerging star Blake Griffin is a perfect complement—the duo has already been dubbed “Stockton and Malone 2.0”—and if the partnership lasts half as long, a title for one of the most clueless franchises in any league is within the realm of possibility. That the Clippers got so much better at the expense of the Lakers will only make the rivalry edgier.

This assumes that the team on the other side of town will react the way it always does, but it's been a very

un-Laker-like few days. It began with Stern blocking the deal that would have moved Lamar Odom to New Orleans and Pau Gasol to Houston in exchange for Paul, while the Rockets would have sent Luis Scola, Kevin Martin and Goran Dragic, and a first-round draft choice to New Orleans. Facing the prospect of an unhappy Odom, the Lakers inexplicably pulled the trigger on a deal shipping him to Dallas for next to nothing.

It was little surprise when Kobe Bryant complained, another thing when Phil Jackson weighed in from retirement. Besides, it leaves the Lakers with the prospect of a grumpy Gasol

and no easy choices to retool a lineup that looked old and out-of-sorts at the end of last season.

But the collateral damage in the Paul deal wasn't limited to the Lakers. The Celtics had their eyes on David West while the trade carousel was still spinning and the Rockets, who were also harboring hopes of plying Nene away, are left scrambling to fill their front line. Instead of contenders, both now will be marginal playoff qualifiers.

The sooner Stern gets out of the ownership business, the better. We saw baseball commissioner Bud Selig wearing two hats—for part of his tenure, he remained owner of the Milwaukee Brewers—and

remember how that worked out.

Certainly, Stern may have made the Clippers much better and the Hornets more attractive to a buyer in the short run. But like Selig, he can't do anything about competitive balance without real NFL-style salary caps and revenue-sharing agreements. That was clear when the agents for a few of his marquee players began investigating deals even before the ink was dry on the latest collective bargaining agreement.

"It's been a lot of fun," Stern said, referring to his stint playing fantasy general manager for the Hornets. "But I don't get paid to have fun."

Good thing, too.



Ryan, Abraham
lead Falcons to
rout of Jags

Page 25

Saipan Tribune Sports

Heat host
scrimmage for
season-ticket
holders

Page 26

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

28 SATURDAY - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17-18, 2011

Proa, FGC advance to semifinals

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Proa and FGC advanced to the Garapan Basketball League-IT&E Cup' single-elimination semifinals after deposing separate opponents Thursday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Proa bolted past Andhok's, 84-54, in the curtain raiser, while FGC bested Ol'Aces, 91-82, in the late pairing.

The playoffs continue on Sunday with Blue Haus-Satbahi taking on Mobil at 7pm. After Sunday's game, league officials will conduct a raffle to determine the pairings for the semifinals.

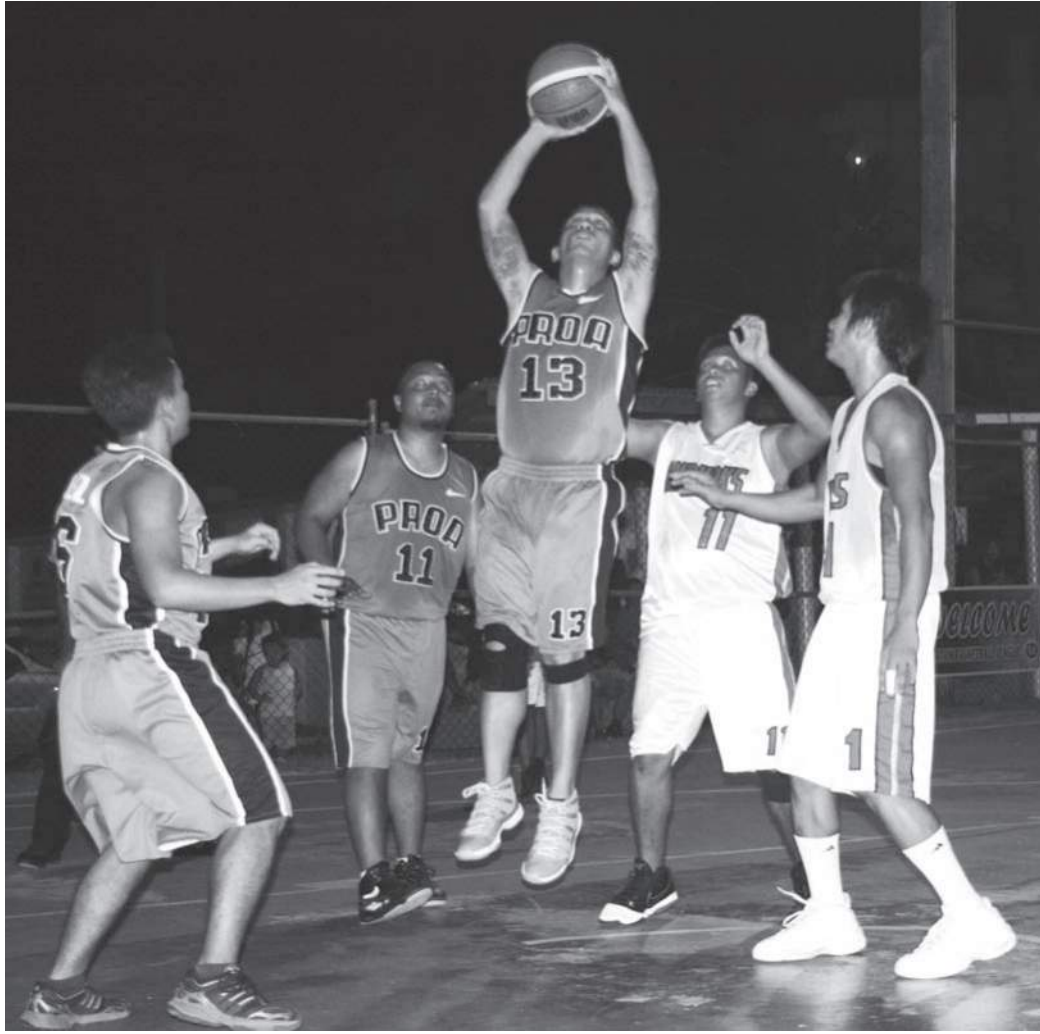
After the matchups are determined, the semifinals are slated to tip off Monday night at 6:15pm and 8pm.

Game 1 of the best-of-three finals is set for Wednesday at 7pm.

The regular season awards will be presented during half-time of Wednesday's game.

Proa 84, Andocks 54

Proa got right down to business from the tip off and quickly



Proa's Joe Villacrusis gets a good look at the basket in Thursday's GBL-IT&E Cup playoff match against Andhok's at the Garapan Basketball Court.

built a 21-10 lead in the opening 10 minutes.

Pete Iguel took the reins for Proa with six points to go with an array of nifty assists.

Andhok's offense picked up a little in the second quarter,

but its defense simply could not make a stop as Proa jumped ahead, 48-27, at halftime.

Iguel again led Proa in the period with seven markers sprinkled with a healthy dose of mixed support.

Then after the break, Proa came out and planted the dagger in Andhok's early, limiting its opponent to just seven points

**See PROA on
Page 27**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

IT&E Kamote's poses for a team photo with supporters after narrowly defeating Snipers to win SEDA's Master Division Bud Light Cup championship at Jonny's Bar & Grill Wednesday night.

Three crowned Bud Light Cup winners

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER



Es'y Kitchen-duo, IT&E Kamote's and Kitchen's SOS Akiramenai, and Bar Gaia's Gaiana-B were all crowned Saipan Electronic Dart Association's Bud Light Cup champions of their respective Masters, B-Fanihi,

and B-Flame Tree divisions earlier this week.

In addition, Tuesday B-League's Sabalu Boys, of D'Pirates Bar, and C-Division's Anies Imuza, of Sand's Bar, just finished up their regular seasons in first place. Their Bud Light Cup tournaments are set to take place next week.

On Wednesday, top-ranked IT&E Kamote's grinded out a win over fourth seed and host

See THREE on Page 27

HS boys basketball season tips off Jan. 9

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER



Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization's high school boys basketball season is slated to start on Jan. 9, 2012 at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Five teams make up both the junior varsity and varsity divisions.

The varsity division is made up of the MHS Dolphins, Grace Christian Academy Eagles, Mount Carmel School Knights, Saipan Southern High School Manta Rays, and defending champion Kagman High School Ayuyus.

The junior varsity teams include MHS, GCA, SSSHS, KHS, and Saipan International School Geckos.

Opening day starts with MHS and GCA squaring off in a junior



varsity duel at 4pm followed by the varsity main event featuring SSSHS against MCS.

The regular season will have a double-round robin format.

All games will be held at the MHS Gym with junior varsity matches tipping off, for the most part, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 4pm with the second paring, if necessary, starting after a 10-minute break.

MISO's double-elimination postseason is scheduled to start on March 9 and 10 at the MHS Gym. Tinian High School would be granted an automatic fourth seed in the bracket if they make it over.

Saipan Southern High School's Melvin Cadiang pump fakes Kagman High School's Ichitaro Faisao in a file photo from last year's MISO boys caging at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

ROSELYN MONROYO

By JIM LITKE
AP Sports Columnist

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The commissioner strikes back—sort of

David Stern faces the same problem as the commissioner of every other pro sports league operating in North America, save the NFL.

He's got too many lousy teams—or if you prefer, not enough superstars to go around—and a labor deal that handcuffs him from trying to do anything about it.

So give the NBA boss an 'A' for effort by maneuvering Chris Paul to the Clippers for the sake of competitive balance. But also recognize the deal for what it was: a raging conflict-of-interest that could come back to haunt him soon enough.

Trading on his second job as proxy owner of the league-owned New Orleans Hornets, Stern nixed a trade that would have sent Paul to the Lakers and claimed he got a better one when the

See SORT OF on Page 27